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Ina Juva

**Who can be ‘normal’? Constructions of normality
and processes of exclusion in two Finnish com-
prehensive schools**

ACADEMIC DISSERTATION

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Pre-examiners

Professor Gerald Walton, Lakehead University

Professor Girma Berhanu, University of Gothenburg

Custos

Professor Gunilla Holm, University of Helsinki

Supervisors

Professor Gunilla Holm, University of Helsinki

Professor Marianne Dovemark, University of Gothenburg

Postdoctoral researcher Anna-Leena Riitaoja, University of Helsinki

Opponent

Senior Lecturer Ghazala Bhatti, Bath Spa University

Cover illustration

Tuuli From

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Abstract

This doctoral dissertation examines how normality is constructed in two Finnish comprehensive schools. The study’s main aim is to explain how the staff in the two studied schools constructs normality, and how the constructions of normality affect the exclusion of students. This study is part of the Perceptions and Constructions of Marginalisation and Belonging in Education (PeCMaBE) research project, which examined how students and school staff construct marginalization, exclusion, and inclusion in school. The research project took place between 2013 and 2016.

The research questions of this study are: How do school staff perceive and construct normality and the ‘normal’ student in the school? How does the categorization of students as ‘not-normal’ influence their position in the school?

This study is an ethnographic study which includes data produced through several methods. As part of the study, 32 staff members and 48 students were interviewed. There were also 13 group interviews with students and staff. The participant observations were made in two upper comprehensive schools in the Finland capital region. The school students came from a range of socioeconomic, cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds. Manuals and textbooks for social skills were analyzed to contextualize the main data.

This study draws from the concept of normality and especially how it has been applied in the social sciences. As is typical in ethnography, it combined several theoretical perspectives. The theoretical perspective has its roots in post-structural feminist studies and disability studies. Also theoretical and conceptual tools from the fields of educational philosophy and sociology were used. Earlier research has shown that the school can have an important role in constructing and maintaining normality. However, one of the main result of this study is that normality is not only an average but also an ideal of how human beings should be.

The three articles had different focuses on the relationship between normality and school. Normality was constructed as how an ideal student or human being should be. This ideal included an expectation of how to be Finnish and have ‘correct’ social skills. The interviews with the staff showed that the students were expected to fit in to Finnish culture. Finnishness as an identity was a part of the construction of an ‘ideal’ student. It was not perceived as an ethnic identity, but as a part of normality. Other ethnic identities were seen as potentially problematic.

As Finnishness was constructed as normality, it was possible to present the school as neutral and 'equal' where identities other than Finnishness were not welcomed.

The interviews with the staff contextualized by the manuals and textbooks for social skills showed that the 'correct' social skills were one of the traits for a student to be constructed as being 'normal'. If the students did not have the social skills considered as the correct ones, they were expected to modify their behavior for them to be included within normality. Among the 'correct' social skills was the demand that they be able to adapt to the school and society, and not to cause problems and not to challenge the formal and informal school. The students were required to recognize the limits of the 'correct' social skills as part of what was considered to be 'correct' behavior.

In earlier research, bullying had often been constructed as a question of individual behavior. This study broadens the concept of bullying by examining teachers' role in bullying. The participant observations suggest that if the student was categorized by the students and teachers as 'not-normal' they were in risk to be bullied. In some cases the teachers did not recognize the student categorized as 'not-normal' as a victim of bullying, and therefore not worthy of help and care. Thus, bullying could be seen as a way to prevent or hinder students from deviating from the norms and normality. Normality, on the other hand, reflects the expectations of the society and its political, economic, ideological and cultural structures. Hence, it is possible to understand bullying as not only a question of the 'not-normality' of an individual child, but as a question of the norms and ideals of the society.

Keywords: normality, exclusion, Finnishness, social skills, bullying

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Kuka voi olla 'normaali'? Normaaliuden rakentumisia ja ulossulkemisen prosesseja kahdessa suomalaisessa yläkoulussa.

Tiivistelmä

Tämä väitöskirja käsittelee normaaliuden rakentamista kahdessa yläkoulussa Suomessa. Väitöskirjassa analysoidaan sitä, miten kouluhenkilökunta rakentaa normaaliutta kahdessa tutkimuskoulussa ja miten normaaliuden rakentaminen vaikuttaa oppilaiden ulossulkemiseen. Väitöskirja on tehty osana tutkimusprojektia *Perceptions and Constructions of Marginalisation and Belonging in Education* (PeCMaBE). Tutkimusprojektissa keskityttiin siihen, miten oppilaat ja opettajat rakensivat marginalisaatiota, eksklusiota ja inklusiota. Tutkimusprojekti toteutettiin aikavälillä 2013–2016.

Tämän väitöskirjatutkimuksen tutkimuskysymykset ovat seuraavat: Miten koulun henkilökunta hahmottaa ja rakentaa normaaliuden ja 'normaalin' oppilaan koulussa? Miten 'ei normaaliksi' kategorisoiminen vaikuttaa oppilaiden asemaan koulussa?

Väitöskirja on etnografinen tutkimus ja aineisto tuotettiin useiden erilaisten menetelmien kautta. Tutkimuksessa haastateltiin 32 henkilökunnan jäsentä ja 48 oppilasta. Osana tutkimusta oli myös kolmetoista ryhmähaastattelua, johon osallistui oppilaita ja henkilökuntaa. Haastattelut ja osallistuva havainnointi tehtiin kahdessa yläkoulussa pääkaupunkiseudulla Suomessa. Molempien koulujen oppilaat tulivat erilaisista sosioekonomisista, kulttuurisista, etnisisistä ja uskonnollisista taustoista. Sosiaalisia taitoja koskevia käsikirjoja käytettiin taustoittamaan muita aineistoja.

Tässä tutkimuksessa sovelletaan normaaliuden käsitettä keskittyen erityisesti siihen, miten sitä on käytetty yhteiskuntatieteissä. Tutkimuksessa käytetään useita teoreettisia näkökulmia, mikä on tyyppillistä etnografiselle tutkimukselle. Teoreettinen näkökanta perustuu poststrukturalistiseen feministiseen tutkimukseen ja vammaistutkimukseen. Tutkimuksessa käytetään myös teoreettisia ja käsitteellisiä työkaluja kasvatustieteestä ja kasvatussosiologiasta. Aiempi tutkimus on osoittanut, että koululla on tärkeä rooli normaaliuden rakentamisessa ja ylläpitämisessä. Tämä tutkimus kuitenkin osoittaa, ettei normaalius tarkoita ainoastaan keskiarvoa, vaan se tarkoittaa myös ideaalia siitä, millaisia ihmisten tulisi olla.

Väitöskirjan kolme artikkelia edustavat erilaisia näkökulmia normaaliuden ja koulun välisestä yhteydestä. Koulussa normaalius rakentui sen ajatuksen pohjalta, minkälainen ideaalin oppilaan tai ihmisen tulisi olla. Tähän ideaaliin sisältyy myös ajatus siitä, millainen oppilas on suomalainen, tai millainen oppilas omaa

'oikeanlaiset' sosiaaliset taidot. Opettajien haastatteluista kävi ilmi, että oppilaiden odotettiin sopeutuvan suomalaiseen kulttuuriin. Suomalainen identiteetti oli osa ideaalin oppilaan rakentumista. Sitä ei mielletty etniseksi identiteetiksi, vaan se nähtiin osaksi normaaliutta. Muut etniset identiteetit nähtiin potentiaalisesti ongelmallisiksi. Koska suomalaisuus rakennettiin normaaliudeksi, koulu pystyttiin esittämään neutraalina ja tasa-arvoisena, mihin muut identiteetit kuin suomalaisuus eivät olleet tervetulleita.

Haastattelujen (joita taustoitettiin opas- ja oppikirjoilla) perusteella yksi tapa, jolla oppilas määritettiin normaaliksi, olivat 'oikeanlaiset' sosiaaliset taidot. Jos oppilailla ei ollut 'oikeanlaisia' sosiaalisia taitoja, heidän odotettiin muuttavan käytöstään. Näin heidät voitaisiin katsoa kuuluvan osaksi normaaliutta. 'Oikeanlaisiksi' sosiaalisiksi taidoiksi katsottiin muun muassa se että pystyy sopeutumaan kouluun ja yhteiskuntaan, ja pystyy olemaan aiheuttamatta ongelmia tai olla haastamatta virallista ja epävirallista koulua. Osana 'oikeanlaista' käytöstä oppilaiden oletettiin pystyvän tunnistamaan 'oikeiden' sosiaalisten taitojen rajat.

Aiemmassa tutkimuksessa kiusaaminen määriteltiin usein yksilöiden väliseksi ongelmaksi. Tämä tutkimus laajentaa kiusaamisen käsitettä tarkastelemalla opettajien roolia kiusaamisessa. Osallistuva havainnointi osoitti, että oppilaan kategorisointi 'ei-normaaliksi' muodosti riskin, että oppilas voisi joutua kiusaamisen kohteeksi. Opettajat eivät tunnistanee 'ei-normaaliksi' luokiteltua oppilasta kiusaamisen uhriksi, minkä vuoksi näiden oppilaiden katsottiin ansaitsevan vähemmän apua ja huolenpitoa. Kiusaamisen katsottiin olevan yksi tapa estää oppilaita poikkeamasta normeista ja normaaliudesta. Normaalius heijastaa yhteiskunnan poliittisten taloudellisten, ideologisten ja kulttuurin rakenteiden odotuksia. Näin ollen kiusaamisessa ei ole kyse yksittäisen oppilaan 'ei-normaaliudesta', vaan se sisältää myös kysymyksiä yhteiskunnan normeista ja ideaaleista.

Avainsanat: normaalius, ulossulkeminen, suomalaisuus, sosiaaliset taidot, kiusaaminen

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LIST OF ORIGINAL PUBLICATIONS

- I Juva, I. and Holm, G. (2016). Not All Students are equally equal: Normality as Finnishness. In Kantasalmi, K. and Holm, G. (Eds.). *The State, Schooling, and Identity: Diversifying Education in Europe*. Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 213-232.
- II Juva, I. and Vaahtera T. (2017). “Adaptable creature” – Social skills required to be ‘normal’ in the Finnish school. In Vaahtera, T. Niemi, A-M. Lappalainen, S. and Beach, D. (Eds.) *Troubling Educational Cultures in the Nordic Countries*. London: The Tufnell Press, 52-68.
- III Juva, I. Holm, G. and Dovemark, M. (2018). “He failed to find his place in this school” – Re-examining the role of teachers in bullying in a Finnish comprehensive school. *Ethnography & Education*.

1 Introduction

My journey with normality began in 2013, when I taught at a street school in Mexico. My students, who belonged to the Hñähñú people, and who worked as street sellers, participated in constructing the curriculum with us. One day I was talking about the future research that I planned to undertake in one of the official intercultural schools at which some of the students attended (some of the students went to our school first, and in the afternoon, to the formal school¹, which in this case was the intercultural school). One of the students then said: "Why do you want to study us, we are not the problem", which made me consider why indeed I wanted to undertake research on them and their school, when it could be more interesting to ask what was happening in mainstream education, and what notions of the students were part of it. We had also had discussions about the contents of the school books used in the intercultural school, and how in all of the school books there were just pictures of 'white' (mestizo) families with modern homes, which did not correspond in any way to the students' lives. From that point, I started my journey to capture and to question the notion of normality, and expectations of behaving in certain ways and having a correct set of attributes intertwined with it.

We use the word 'normal' all the time. We use it to describe other people and their behavior and traits; we use it to describe other phenomena and things such as weather or clothing and endless amounts of other things too. In this research I have especially concentrated on how the word 'normal' is used to describe and explain students in two upper comprehensive schools in Finland. The idea of normality is often connected to what we think of as ordinary, and behind the notion of ordinary is what we think of as being average. However, though we connect average to the notion of normality, the limits of normality are quite ambiguous and vague. It seems that it is easier to point out what is 'not-normal' than it is to point out what is 'normal'. In this study I use the notion of 'not-normal'² in place of abnormal, as using the category of abnormal may cause the idea that it exists objectively and separately from 'normal'. 'Not-normal', instead, underlines the relational role of the concept. 'Not-normal' only exist in the construction of nor-

¹ The school our students were supposed to attend was a public intercultural school. The problem was that the indigenous language taught at the school was not their mother tongue. Also, the rules were strict and many of the students dropped out and came to our school. There were also students who went to both schools and used our school as an extra resource.

² The categorization of the students as 'not-normal' was present in the field and was actively done by students and teachers. I have chosen to use this concept straight through the text.

normality and what is left outside it, which changes between contexts and also historically. However, there are some traits such as middle classness and whiteness that have persisted since the beginning of the modern use of normality (Davies, 1995). In this research I have challenged the common sense notion of normality as ordinary or average. I deconstructed the notion of normality in the context of the school and propose that it also includes the idea of what we consider to be the ideal of how a human being should be. I concentrated especially on the school sphere, as normality is an issue that concerns everyone who enters the school, as the school is one of the main institutions maintaining and producing normality (Rinne, 2012).

My interest in normality was evoked again when starting the fieldwork in the Perceptions and Constructions of Marginalisation and Belonging in Education (PeCMaBE) project, since the teachers made a connection between marginalisation and being 'not-normal' in the first interviews. The present study is based on a bigger PeCMaBE research project, which focused on how students and school staff construct marginalization, exclusion, and inclusion in school. The research project was part of The Health and Welfare of Children and Young People (SKIDI-KIDS) program, which was a research program funded by the Academy of Finland, focusing particularly on the area of marginalization. Through participatory observations and interviews we tried to answer questions on how exclusion and marginalization are produced at school. The fieldwork was conducted in two junior high schools (13-15-year old students) in the capital region of Finland in 2013-2016. The PeCMaBE project examined marginalization in two Finnish upper comprehensive schools. The main idea of the project was that the students' points of view of marginalization would serve as the departing point. The PeCMaBE project was based on an ethnographic approach, combining participatory observations with individual interviews, group interviews and change group work. In the context of this study, change group work means a continuation of the group interviews where the students and the researchers and teachers suggest solutions to tackle marginalization and exclusion in their school. Both schools chosen for the project had diverse student bodies, varying in ethnic, cultural, religious, and social class backgrounds, different gender identifications as well as students with special needs. Five researchers and two research assistants worked on the project across several time periods. When I became part of the PeCMaBE project, I focused my interest on the concept of normality. The purpose of the research as a whole was to examine how the school as an institution contributes to and constructs the marginalization of children.

1.1 Research questions

The main aim of my research is to contribute with knowledge to how the school staff and students construct normality in the schools through their activities, and

how it affects the exclusion of some students and/or student groups. My research questions are

RQ1: How do school staff perceive and construct normality and the ‘normal’ student in the school?

RQ2: How does the categorization of students as ‘not-normal’ influence their position in the school?

The three articles that comprise this dissertation respond to the three research questions in the following way: Article I, Not all students are equally equal: normality as Finnishness: and Article II, Getting along – social skills required to be ‘normal’ in the Finnish school, respond to RQ1. All the three articles address RQ2. Nevertheless, Article III, “He failed to find his place in this school” – Re-examining the role of teachers in bullying in a Finnish comprehensive school, concentrates specifically on RQ2.

1.2 Theoretical framework

I use the concept of normality as the main tool for analysis throughout this work. The concept of normality is used as a lens to the three different themes – Finnishness, social skills and bullying, presented in three articles. Thus the concept of normality binds together the three articles to enrich the use of normality in each article. I use multiplicity of theoretical approaches from a range of fields. The core of my conceptual and theoretical perspective has been influenced by post-structural feminist studies and disability studies. I also draw from the theories that come from the field of educational philosophy and educational sociology. It is typical for ethnographic research to combine a range of theoretical perspectives (Lappalainen, Hynninen, Kankkunen, Lahelma & Tolonen, 2007). In my research, I maintain a critical stance towards the idea that some human action or community can be explained perfectly by any theory. The idea has been clearly stated by Bakunin (2011) and Feyerabend (1999), who share the idea that lived experiences, communities and relations between humans and other subjects are so complex that there cannot be one theory that could wholly capture this complexity. Bakunin (2011) criticized the university as an institution and the researcher in the university for converting the complexity of the society, or human life, to abstractions and so freezing an ever changing complex situation in abstract models and concepts that can be used to legitimize the position of few as the experts. I am also aware of how my position as a white, middle class person affects my interpretation of different processes and actors. My position also shaped how I formulated the research focus, what I asked, and how I interacted with the different actors in the school (Jeffrey, 2018).

1.3 Road map to my thesis (Disposition)

In chapter two the main concept of this study – normality – is discussed. The first part considers its history and the etymology of the concept. The examining of the concept has been divided into several parts. First, the history and role of statistics and social sciences is discussed. After that, normality and deviance in the context of schooling are presented. The third chapter first describes the empirical data and how the data were produced. Ethnography as an approach and methodology is discussed, as well as the positioning of the author. Ethical considerations are also discussed. Access to the field and the research process are then presented. In the last part of the chapter, the process of analysis is opened up. The fourth chapter considers the earlier research and the theoretical tools used in the three articles and they are combined to the results of these articles. The results, earlier research and the theoretical tools have been organized through the three perspectives presented in each one of the articles. These three themes, Finnishness, social skills and bullying, are examined from the perspective of normality. The fifth chapter focuses on the concluding discussion. First, methodology and theory are discussed then the constructions of normality in the two schools in the study are examined and discussed. The chapter also address how some students are positioned outside normality and how this is connected to exclusion and marginalization. Finally, reflections on and implications from this research are presented.

2 ‘Normal’ and normality

The concept of normality has been studied in many fields, including the philosophy of science, philosophy of education and sociology of education. I applied theoretical and conceptual tools from disability studies, sociology of education and feminist poststructuralism. As an idea, normality has spread to many areas of modern society and for that reason, it has been studied from multiple perspectives. The area of disability studies has addressed the concept of normality, by referring to normality as an unmarked and unproblematic position that neutralizes and legitimates power relations (Mcruer, 2006; Garland Thomson, 1997; Halperin, 1995).

The ‘normal’ stands indifferently for what is typical, the unenthusiastic objective average, but it also stands for what has been, good health, and for what will be, our chosen destiny. That is why the benign and sterile-sounding word ‘normal’ has become one of the most powerful ideological tools of the twentieth century (Hacking, 1990, p.169).

This chapter features discussion of the concepts of normality, its history, etymology and how it became legitimized in a range of fields of scholarship. First, I offer a history of normality to provide a background to its further examination. Then I explain how it was used in statistics and in the social sciences, and how the concept of normality emerged as a need to maintain and construct a subject that was an ideal subject from the point of view of eugenics and industrialists. Then I describe how the terms normality and not-normality became central terms in statistics and in the social sciences and in the processes of schooling, industrialization and individualization. With describing the historical processes of constructing normality I build a context for explaining how and why normality is constructed in the school as it is.

2.1 History and etymology of the concepts of normality and ‘normal’

The term ‘normal’ first appeared in the French language in 1759 (Canguilhem, 2007). Between 1840 and 1860, norm and normality became more generalized (Davis, 1995). Before that period, human bodies were not understood in terms of norm or normality but in terms of ideal. An ideal body, however, belonged to gods and to mythical characters, thus it was not possible for a human to reach the ideal. In other words, nobody was ideal except the gods. In the place of ideal, the grotesque was a notion connected to common life. Grotesque meant that all the bodies were below the ideal, and in this sense, all the bodies were disabled (Davis, 1995).

Though ‘normal’ is an older word, it was not until 1820 that it started to gain the kind of significance that it has now (Hacking, 1990). In the English language, the word ‘normal’ enters around 1840, with meanings such as “constituting, conforming to, not deviating or differing from, the common type or standard, regular, usual”, this definition was also mentioned for humans and human populations (Davis, 1995, p. 24). The increasing significance of the word ‘normal’ was strongly connected to the rise of the statistical sciences.

2.2 The concepts of ‘normal’ and normality in statistics and social sciences

Since its beginning, statistics has been imbedded with ‘normal’ and normality. The first and the leading members of statistical societies in Britain were industrialists and eugenicists, developing statistics as data for state policy. Statistics had an important role in the classification of the population that was described as deviant, and it became a means of control (Davis, 1995). One of the leading members of the statistical societies was Adolphe Quetelet (1796-1874), a statistician who used the concept of the ‘curve of error.’ The model that was developed to experiment with coin tossing or collecting information for observational astronomers was now applied to human attributes (Hacking, 1990). What was used to measure human attributes was “[T]he familiar graphical representation of the idea is the ‘bell-shaped curve’, the Normal distribution or Gaussian distribution that peaks about the mean”. It is based on the idea that society also follows statistical regularity (Helen, 2016, p. 94–95). In social sciences, the normal distribution concentrated on the search for the ‘average’ human. Quetelet had an important role in shaping normality as the imperative. He developed the notion of *l’homme moyen* – ‘the average man’: “Quetelet maintained that this abstract human was the average of all human attributes in a given country” (Davis, 1995, p. 26). It can be considered to be a mark of bourgeois hegemony that the ‘average man’ also represents moderation and middle class ideology (Davis, 1995). By connecting ‘average man’ to class it became more obvious that “...the average then becomes paradoxically a kind of ideal, a position devoutly to be wished” (Davis, 1995, p. 27). The average or the ‘normal’ individual does not remain only as a tool of the bourgeoisie, but it is also been applied in the sphere of Marxism, as Quetelet connected progress, the ideal society and the average human being, as did Marx. Marx had the notion of an average worker – individual differences were seen as errors in mathematical thinking that would vanish when enough workers were gathered together (Marx, 1970). As a result of the idea of “an average human”, follows the idea that the majority of the population becomes the norm or ‘normal’.

The idea of “an average human” was challenged by Francis Galton (1822-1911). Galton changed the statistical theory about the norm. He changed the error curve to the normal distribution curve by implying that human traits such as high

intelligence or height should not be seen as errors but as valued traits, if they fell on the right side of the curve. Galton wanted to ‘perfect’ the human race³ and some traits such as high intelligence were better from his point of view than low intelligence (Davis, 1995). He questioned the idea of “an average man”. This would become clear as “Galton wanting to avoid the middling of desired traits, would prefer to think of intelligence in ranked order. Although high intelligence in a normal distribution would simply be an extreme, under a ranked system it would become the highest ranked trait” (Davis, 1995). As part of the idea of ranked order, Galton divided the curve into quartiles and the fourth quartile would be the highest-ranked for high intelligence (Davis, 1995). According to Davis (2014), what Galton wanted was a smarter, stronger or more dominant human being, whose traits were connected with “dominant social and political classes in a racialized and sexist society” (Davis, 2014, p. 2). Galton hid the notion of the dominant human being behind the normal curve. This notion of ideal dominant human is connected to the ethical aspects that normality includes. The concept of ‘normal’ or norm contains an ethical aspect, as even though it means typical or regular, he also pointed out that the norms are also important ethical constraints in society (Hacking, 1990). ‘Normal’ contains both ‘is’ and ‘ought to’, meaning that it is descriptive, but is also implicated in setting norms (Hacking, 1990, p. 16). Francis Galton was also interested in the distribution and deviation, as some traits that were statistical deviations were superb traits and others were pathological (Hacking, 1990). To be tall or have a high IQ became more desirable from Galton’s perspective. As Galton also brings the valued traits such as high intelligence to the notion of normality, normality is not only the ‘objective’ mean of traits but it includes thoughts of what kind of traits are valued in human beings, especially in the field of statistics and from there to social sciences in general. Davis explains how the process of bringing the concept of ideal to normality worked in the work of Galton:

What these revisions by Galton signify is an attempt to redefine the concept of the ‘ideal’ in relation to the general population. First, the application of the idea of a norm to the human body creates the idea of deviance or a ‘deviant’ body. Second, the idea of a norm pushes the normal variation of the body through a stricter template guiding the way body ‘should’ be. Third, the revision of the ‘normal curve of distribution’ into quartiles, ranked order, and so on, creates a new kind of ‘ideal’. (Davis, 1995, p. 35)

Normality in its modern meaning cannot be understood without understanding the connection between statistics and eugenics since the early statisticians were

³ Here, ‘race’ has been defined as a cultural, political and social construction.

also eugenicists (Davis, 1995). There is a connection between statistical measurement of humans and the idea that they can and should be improved. Baker (2002) describes eugenics as a complicated and heterogeneous series of discourses, or assumptions and practices (also educational practices). The main connecting theme between these practices and discourses would be "...belief in the necessity of "racial" or "national" improvement through the control of population reproduction" (Baker, 2002, p. 665). Baker explains how the eugenics was a code for promoting a hierarchy of human races through scholarly discourses including medical, psychological, educational and welfare discourses. The top of the evolutionary hierarchy was reserved for the Anglo-Saxon and Teutonic groups and their qualities. These groups were presented as mostly coming from Northern and Western Europe and North America (Baker, 2002).

Statistics included the idea that a "...population can be normed" (Davis, 1995, p. 30). If there is 'standard population' then there must also be 'non-standard population'. As connected to the theories of Darwin, eugenics brought forth the idea of eliminating 'defectives' (Davis, 1995). With the idea of that a 'defective' population exists came the notion that as a counterpart there also exists an ideal population. Accordingly, not only Nazis, but the western world in general, applied eugenic ideas. Both capitalists and socialists/Marxists had the idea of an abstract or universal worker with certain traits, and both thought that this abstract worker and/or humanity could be improved (Davis, 1995).

Hacking (1990) explains the connection between eugenics and the idea of an average man. He states that the roots of eugenics are in liberal philanthropic utilitarian intent to modify population, but also in Quetelet's idea about that statistical laws can determine the features of a population (Hacking, 1990). The traits that Quetelet (in Hacking, 1990) was describing in a normal distribution, were not describing the whole human population, but he was actually writing about a national or racial type and its characteristics. This racial type could be measured through physical and moral qualities and it was to be a new objective way to describe and measure people. The idea behind this was to find the 'average man' of the race. Hacking points out that this is the beginning of eugenics, through which "...one can introduce social policies that will either preserve or alter the average qualities of race. In short, the notion of the average man led to both a new kind of information about populations and a new conception of how to control them" (Hacking, 1990, p. 108).

Though Quetelet's aim was to find the 'average man' of the race, eugenics did not include all white people, but emphasizes a certain kind of whiteness that comes with a certain kind of masculinity and able-bodiedness (Baker, 2002). As noted earlier, Quetelet and Galton based their statistical interpretations of normality on the middle class male. Eugenics was not restrained to the small group, but it became common among a range of social groups and discourses. Nearly all dis-

courses shared the idea of improvement to race or nation. As part of the improvement of the race or nation was the intention to influence nativity. From the perspective of eugenics, when trying to influence the population and nativity, the quantity of nativity could be seen as a threat as it could increase the number of 'defectives'. Quality was as being seen more essential than quantity (Baker, 2002). As Baker (2002) points out referring to Foucault (1989), eugenics included the idea that only those who were at the top of the chain could modify others who were positioned lower in the chain.

2.3 Normality and not-normality

Deviation or not-normality is the counterpart of normality and it is needed to define the 'normal'. It is something that is attached to normality. By defining normality, one defines also the limits of normality as well as what remains 'outside' or at the margins of normality. When some school students are classified as 'normal', other students must fall in the category of 'not-normal'. The limits of the normal and 'not-normal' are constructed and reconstructed continuously, though there are some traits that remain as markers of not-normality. Those traits change but they change slower than some other traits.

The division between normality and deviance have been constructed by "...[s]etting up the European, bourgeois, heterosexual, healthy, male body as the normative standard against which to compare "other" bodies..." (Erevelles, 2011, p. 30). The comparison has been used to enforce "a constitutional divide" between the "perfected naturalized humanity and the aberrant, the unthinkable, quasi-human hybrid and therefore non-human" (Campbell, 2009, p. 5). The division has also been between the middle classness as the 'normal' and the working class as "repellent and disgusting 'other'" (Lawler, 2005, p. 431).

Outsiderhood or deviance means lack of agency (Fahlgren, Johansson & Mulinari, 2011). Some others are more others than others – the points of outsiderhood or deviance, the 'wrong kind of' differences can accumulate. It is not as comfortable for those who are positioned outside normality, and who need to try to pass as 'normal', as it is for those who do not need to even try, because they are directly assumed to be 'normal'. This can occur while trying to pass as heterosexual, it might succeed but it can be very painful (Fahlgren, Johansson & Mulinari, 2011). The educational strategies and attitudes of the 'middle class' are used as a standard for 'lower-class' attitudes. These attitudes are considered to be anti-educational or anti-participatory compared to middle class attitudes. According to that comparison, 'lower-class' attitudes can be described as being deviant or 'not-normal' (Silvennoinen, 2012).

Deviance tells us more about society than about the deviant, due to the fact that people and institutions form the society and define what is deviant for a certain period. The intention to control behavior that differs too much from cultural norms

always exists behind the definition (Silvennoinen & Pihlaja, 2012). It can be said that deviance means breaching of the norms. When one thinks of oneself as 'normal', one also thinks of some other as pathological (Warner, 1999). Deviance also makes norms and normality visible (Rinne, 2012).

The practical dimension of 'normal' has been called normalization, meaning a process through which a population or individual behavior are compared to the 'normal' and measured in relation to the 'normal', for example, by measuring IQ or height (Helen, 2016). As a result of measurement, some people are categorized as 'not-normal'. The outsiderhood is produced simultaneously with the processes of defining what is 'normal' or what is right (Fahlgren, Johansson & Mulinari, 2011).

Being different differs from being 'not-normal', as difference can be more often seen as positive. Fahlgren, Johansson and Mulinari (2011) describe how being different is not a choice that is in reach of everyone, as there are hierarchies structured around gender, class, sexuality and ethnicity. They add that "...It is also a matter of being "different" in the right way, not in an ugly or disgusting or frightening way" (Fahlgren, Johansson & Mulinari, 2011, p. 4). This can mean that some disabled bodies presented as "different", can be seen as frightening or disgusting. However, on the other side, when the difference is presented through 'different' clothing, for example if a person who dresses 'differently' is white and middle class and have the correct set of social skills, then the difference can be seen as neutral or even positive.

Normality always creates a situation in which it is not safe to be categorized as falling outside the definition of normality, as one then is described as being a problem (Fahlgren, 2005). Students do whatever they can to belong to normality, but still it might not be enough as "...To be normal is a position that has to be achieved again and again and always in relation to a particular context" (Fahlgren, Johansson & Mulinari, 2011, p. 8). Thus, the meaning of 'normal' is fickle and ambiguous (Helen, 2016).

2.4 Normality, marginalization and exclusion

In Finland early research on normality has explored the topic through the relationship between normality and marginalization. Defining normality has profound effects on who can be included in and who will be excluded from the society. We cannot analyze or understand marginalization if we do not address the 'center' from where it is marginalized. Construction of normality or the 'normal' student is connected to processes of marginalization and how marginalized students are defined. In sociology of education and in sociological research focusing on special education, marginalization has been described on some occasions as the opposite of normality (Brunila & Isopahkala-Bouret, 2014; Rinne, 2012; Jokinen, Huttunen & Kulmala, 2004).

Marginalization was the main concept of the PeCMaBe research project, of which my dissertation was a part. At the beginning of my analysis and also in the first article, I used the concept of marginalization. Marginalization should be seen as a relation between the center and the periphery (Järvinen & Jahnukainen, 2001). Being at the margins does not necessarily mean that the person has been excluded, but it depends on the context. Marginalization is connected to exclusion, because in both cases, the individual is placed outside the center of that cultural context (Järvinen & Jahnukainen, 2001). Marginalization according to Messiou (2006) can be experienced at two levels in school. At the social level, children are excluded or rejected by their peers, while at the academic level, they cannot access the curriculum, their abilities are not valued, and their participation in school activities is limited (Messiou, 2006). Those who somehow are constructed as 'not normal', can be presented as outsiders and also be marginalized. Even though the limits of the normality and marginalization can seem as though they are fixed, there is movement between those boundaries. Messiou states that "...though some children were identified as possibly experiencing marginalization, and therefore lying outside these boundaries, there were still occasions when the same children were found crossing them. The notion of marginalization here, then, seems not to be a static state" (Messiou 2006, p. 52). I share Messiou's idea that there is a variety of ways to conceptualize marginalization and other concepts such as exclusion (Messiou, 2006).

As I proceeded with the analysis, I noticed that it was impossible to read and explain the data by using only the concept of marginalization, especially as I understood marginalization as something when a person or group can voluntarily position themselves at the margins of society. In the second article I used the concept of exclusion and I only used the concept of marginalization when it was mentioned in the literature. In the third article, I mainly used the concept of exclusion, as it does not include the notion that it could be voluntary.

I define exclusion as a multifaceted phenomenon which is connected to who is constructed as 'normal' and who is not. Exclusion has to do with the access to resources and the opportunity to make decisions about one's life and about one's community. Youdell (2006) describes the relation between social exclusion and normality:

Social exclusion can be synonymous with multiple disadvantage; it can be recruited to think about non-participation in the economy, production, politics and the social realm; and it can be deployed to define the exterior of the social mainstream, to delimit a normative centre of society (Youdell, 2006, p. 12).

To understand exclusion, one must consider economic, social and political structures (Youdell, 2006). I understand exclusion more as a relation or process

than an attribute of an individual or a group, as a relation or process exclusion is part of wider political, cultural and social structures of society. Exclusion can be approached with the focus on the actors and structures responsible for the exclusion and not on the individuals who are being excluded. Macrae, Maguire & Milbourne (2010) distinguish between 'weak' and 'strong' versions of exclusion by underlining how the 'weak' version concentrates on how the excluded can be included while the 'strong' version addresses the mechanisms and the actors who use their capacity to exclude, and in this way the attention can be placed on those who are doing the excluding. Institutions of formal education such as the school can participate in the exclusion of students by their own processes and practices (Youdell, 2006). It is important to identify "...how educational exclusions are produced through mundane and day-to-day processes and practices of educational institutions" (Youdell, 2006, p. 12-13). Exclusion from the school can affect the students' opportunities for full participation in society (Macrae, Maguire & Milbourne, 2010). Exclusion can be seen in relation to normality in the way that the exclusion would mark the distance from the normative center. The distance can be based on traits of the constructions of normality such as class, ethnicity, (dis)ability, and if the traits that are considered to be 'not-normal' accumulate, the distance from the normality grows and with it the exclusion. Exclusion in this sense means that the access to resources and the option to decide on one's life gets harder. Youdell (2006) ties together normality and exclusion by describing how exclusion and inclusion are connected to the processes of separation between 'normal' and 'not-normal'. She considers these processes to be part of regular educational discourses. What is included is the 'good' student, which is the ideal or acceptable student, and what is excluded is the 'bad' student who is "...the unacceptable or even impossible learner" (Youdell, 2006, p. 31). The school and school community (for example in cases of bullying) punishes/excludes those who do not fulfill the requirements of normality (Thornberg, 2015a).

2.5 Normality and school

The centrality of the school's role in constructing and maintaining normality has been pointed out by several researchers (Mietola, 2014; Riitaoja, 2013; Baker, 2012; Silvennoinen & Pihlaja 2012; Rinne, 2012; Mietola & Lappalainen, 2006; Davis, 1995). The concept of normality emerged in the eighteenth century. It was applied through education "...as a principle of coercion in teaching with the introduction of a standardized education and the establishment of the *écoles normales* (teachers' training colleges)..." (Foucault, 1977, p.184). The normal schools (*écoles normales*), which were teacher training colleges in France in the nineteenth century, are an excellent example of the connection between school and normality. The schools aimed to normalize students, to make them like the specific model (Warner, 1999). Historically, schools have also had an important role in defining

the line between ‘normal’ and deviant behavior (Rinne, 2012). Thus, school has been one of the main institutions in assessing children about if they will be able to adapt to society or, if they are will be a potential problem.

Classifying and testing the normality of the children at school contains the idea of the normal curve, in the form of calculating the norm or average. The process of classifying has permeated nearly all areas in modernity (Davis, 1995). At school, students are divided mostly by the normal distribution in relation to the normal curve, meaning that there are fewer in the lowest and highest quartiles, and more in the middle quartiles (Antikainen, Rinne & Koski 2009). This can mean division by grades or development. Most things at school can somehow be measured according to the normal distribution. At school, students then learn where they stand in relation to normality (Rinne, 2012). Among the processes of classification, school and the labor market then systematically produce deviance, by positioning individuals to compete and placing them in a hierarchy based on the results of this competition (Silvennoinen & Pihlaja, 2012). The classifying practices then included the competition for grades, in which those who do not succeed in obtaining high-enough grades form their own group and are stamped as a group that does not do so well. As part of the division of students, eugenics was deeply connected to schools. Its ideas were implemented by classifying practices that were usually implemented through testing the children’s personality, IQ or development (Garton, 2000). The classification of students has therefore been an important factor at school. Thus, school does not only produce integration into society, but also stratification by its classifying means (Rinne, 2012).

Elementary school in Finland, when it started to grow, was the only institution diagnosing and classifying ‘mentally-deviant’ students from the whole age cohort. Its task was to produce ‘normal’ citizens. Having more finely-tuned diagnosis of ‘mentally-deviant’ students became a tool to separate more efficiently those who could be a resource in society, who were able to learn and work, from those who could not (Jauhiainen, 2012). The stigma of not doing well in the competition leads to a process of marginalization, through which the amount of education declines, which then affects their position in the labor market. Being less educated is hard to hide in the labor market and it leads to the stigmatization of less educated students (Silvennoinen & Pihlaja, 2012). Rinne (2012) states that “[D]ifferent classifications and evaluations tend to work as an expectations horizon and self-fulfilling predictions [own translation]” (p. 49). Hence deviance in school and society does not reside in the individual but is produced in relation to the school/educational system and its norms, expectations and demands (Rinne, 2012). Also, some groups were produced as being problematic through the classifying practices used. By naming someone as being degenerate or feeble minded, the subjectivity connected to that word was enforced on the persons who were classified as such. These were not just factors of origin – social, racial, but they were also applied to

the behavior of the children (Baker, 2002). Also, by classifying students, the division between normality and deviance has been presented as natural or real, and thus treated as a biological fact, and not as a social definition (Mietola, 2014). The assessment of children, and especially their behavior, is meant to define if there are going to be any potential problems. Due to their behavior, some children are categorized as potentially problematic. Students categorized as potentially problematic are treated as if there was a need to rescue them from themselves and modified for citizenship, while at the same time keeping them separate so they are not able to contaminate the 'normal' students. The aim is then to identify them to avoid the assumed problems (Baker, 2002 see also Campbell, 2000).

3 Research methodology and research journey

In this chapter I discuss ethnography as an approach and methods used in this research. I also address questions concerning my positioning in this study and how it is connected to ethics. Then I describe the access to the field and being in the field. After that, I describe how the different types of interviews were done and the manuals I used to contextualize the interviews. In the last section I describe the process of analysis.

3.1 Ethnography as an approach

Ethnography is an approach that can provide one view to the theme being researched, and not as the only valid approach that exists (Hammersley, 2018). There is a list of features that constitute an ethnography. Most ethnographers would agree with the list, even though they might not expect all the research to include all the points. These features include data collection over long periods of time to undertaking participant observation and producing a range of types of data. Although these features are quite widely accepted they are also challenged. For example, the time spent in the field might be discussed, as there is no straight answer to the question of how long is enough (Hammersley, 2018; Jeffrey & Troman, 2004).

Ethnography is more complex than just gathering data from school through participatory observation. Ethnography is understood as being a theory that articulates the research process, in other words as an approach (Lappalainen, 2007). As an approach, ethnography can be described as "...a family of methods involving direct and sustained social contact with agents in the "worlds" in which they live their lives, and of richly writing up that encounter and in so doing, respecting, recording, and representing, at least partly in its own terms, the irreducibility of human lived experience" (Trondman, Willis & Lund, 2018, p. 36). Generally, it is seen as a process when the researcher has been in the field for a period (Rajander, 2010; Jeffrey & Troman, 2004). It is also seen as an ethical meeting, one at which the researchers listen to the participants they meet in the research process, focusing on the meanings and knowledge participants express (Lappalainen, 2007; Jeffrey, 2018).

Ethnographic data are generated by the researcher and hence they are not something to be discovered (Rajander, 2010). The theoretical views and understandings affect both – what Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999) call the selection of data but also how the researcher perceives it. Rajander (2010) underlines how based on

earlier research "...ethnographic texts present one among many possible representations and are written from a particular perspective" (Rajander, 2010, p. 47; see also Jeffrey, 2018). What was clear during our research project was that we understood the knowledge produced as being partial, not representing some objective truth. Ethnographic knowledge can be described by stating that the multi voiced and chaotic reality of an ethnographic field and the randomness of encounters makes it impossible to try to make a single true story (Hakala & Hynninen, 2007).

The researcher becomes a part of the day-to-day life of the research participants, in order to understand their ways of seeing the world and the constructions arrange their understanding of the world (Goetz and Comte, 1988). For most people, school as a context is familiar because they have gone to school, and have experiences and memories linked to the school. For this reason, I had to make the familiar strange, to see the school through new eyes (Gordon, Holland & Lahelma, 2007). Rajander (2010) states that by making the familiar strange researchers provide "...new insights in the processes of work in the school..." (p. 52). The researcher always has to negotiate between familiarity and unfamiliarity. The process of distancing oneself and making the familiar unfamiliar is important as well as making a distance to one's own expectations (Tolonen, 2001). Ethnographers go into the field with preliminary research questions and those research questions can change during their time in the field. The on-going analysis can lead to new questions (Hakala & Hynninen, 2007). By doing an ethnography the researcher can also challenge, deconstruct and question their own knowledge (Hakala & Hynninen, 2007).

The analysis started when we created the research questions, as we had different theoretical points of departure that affected what we wanted to focus on in our participatory observations and interviews. For example, we discussed the notion of marginalization, and each member of the research group brought a different view on how the concept could be understood and what aspects we should concentrate on. The different conceptualizations brought challenges, but they also brought in new ideas. Based on the initial discussions, we made the first versions of the research questions. When writing the research questions based on the discussions, we undertook the first part of the analysis by bringing together our expectations and points of interest in the field, as well as theoretical views. This is common in ethnographic research: different parts of research processes overlap. Ethnographic research can then be a process through which research questions, fieldnotes, interviews, interpretations and other aspects feed each other and change during the research process and result in a deeper understanding of the issue being researched (Riitaoja, 2013; see also Lappalainen, 2007).

3.2 Positioning

In the discussions about ethnography as an approach, and especially in the field of feminist research, there has been much discussion about reflectivity and positioning of the researcher as part of that reflectivity. The discussion about value-free research in feminist research started in the 1990s as part of a discussion about the position of the researcher (Tolonen & Palmu, 2007). The notions of reflexivity and positioning have had important roles in educational ethnography and in ethnography in general. Ethnographers have discussed their work and positionalities, and through reflection they have sought to understand how these positionalities affect their roles as participant and observer (Marques da Silva & Parker Webster, 2018).

In the ethnographic research that takes place after the ‘linguistic turn’ (which turned the emphasis towards the language and discourse), the attention has been on how the research is ‘filtered’ through research interests, theoretical frameworks or points of view and through the selections made (Mietola, 2014). Niemi (2015) asks what the presence of researchers and their expectations brings to the research? This means that one must be reflective of one’s own interpretation of the reality. By positioning myself, I seek to make my methodological choices more transparent. Under the following subheadings: 1) The limits of knowledge, 2) Recognizing hierarchies and my own position in it, 3) Positioning as an ethical question and 4) Interfering in the field, I explain how these forms of positioning have affected what the forms of action I have taken inside and outside the field, and how those different forms of action have affected my research.

3.2.1 The limits of the knowledge

One thing I tried to keep in mind during the research process that this was an opportunity to get in touch with the knowledge of the students and the staff of the school. Ethnography can be understood as an ethical encounter through which the researcher ‘listens’ to the knowledge of the research participants but also realizes that the researcher can never totally attain their knowledge (Lappalainen, 2007). Hakala and Hynninen (2007) also point out that the knowledge in ethnographic research is formed with research participants, but as Lappalainen has mentioned, the researcher cannot know what the participant knows. In the process of reconstructing one’s view in and out of the field, it is also important to focus on those who are silent (Tolonen, 2001). The form of action that can easily be seen or heard attracts the gaze of the researcher most likely more than the silences (Gordon, Holland, Lahelma & Tolonen, 2005). In some cases, I observed those who made most noise in the classroom and after critical pondering, I also paid attention to the students who were quiet. I then tried to observe the silences in the classroom.

3.2.2 Recognizing hierarchies and my own position in them

Researchers must reflect on their positions and emotions in the field (Coffey, 1999), but that does not deconstruct the power structures per se, where the researcher is in a quite privileged position. University is a privileged place for people to produce knowledge that is recognized as trustworthy knowledge (Bakunin, 2011). An important piece of information that a researcher can give out about their position is their ethnicity or social class, which positions the researchers in different places in school hierarchies. The positioning of the researcher in the hierarchies can influence who dares to or wants to approach the researcher, and whom the researcher approaches. There is an asymmetry in the researcher-participant relationship, as the researcher can define the rules of the research and may have advantages based on their higher position in the hierarchy and their social and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1996). I also consider that I have a position of power because it is my interpretation of the field that finally is heard, and I also set the themes and objectives of the research, as Bourdieu (1996) mentioned. Being a researcher means being in a position of power.

My position in relation to participants, and especially students, was asymmetrical throughout the research process. However, the asymmetrical process also concerned the teachers, as the researcher is considered to have more power and knowledge about the research and knowledge that is legitimated by society (Pelkonen & Louhiala, 2002). Even though I tried to be aware of how my position affected my actions in the field and how I interpreted what I observed and heard, these normative structures are deeply embraced and difficult to make transparent, even to oneself. Researchers also need to be aware of their own position and history of how they influence the interpretations. Researchers should be self-aware not only of their position but also about methodological choices. Accordingly, researchers should be aware of the discourses of their theoretical background or disciplines, because these affect the researchers' gaze – and the interpretations researchers make (Gordon, Holland, Lahelma & Tolonen, 2005).

Challenging one's own constructions of the field is difficult but talking with other researchers in our project about what I observed helped me to understand (Lahelma, Lappalainen, Mietola & Palmu, 2014). Even more essential was the pondering on how my gaze was formed as the gaze of a white able-bodied middle class person. With the 'gaze', I mean the ways I observed, what I chose to observe and how I understood and described the situations in the school (Palmu, 2007). My background is inevitably a part of my observations and analysis. I tried to be as conscious as possible about how my perception of the world affects my observations and how my research is just one interpretation of what happened in the field (Jeffrey, 2018). It is impossible to change my prejudices, attitudes or the structures I used in explaining and understanding the world (Tolonen, 2001). If one wants to undo power hierarchies in the research process, one must be aware of one's own position in those hierarchies.

3.2.3 Positioning as an ethical question

In the context of ethnography and being involved with participants for long periods, it is of the highest importance to reflect that the ethical responsibilities we have as researchers doing ethnography are not separate from our personal ethics (Dennis, 2018). The first step of research ethics is to be aware of one's own positions and the methodological and theoretical starting points as "...ethnographic texts present one among many possible representations and are written from a particular perspective" (Rajander, 2010, p. 47). For that reason, it is important for the researcher to be open about their position and about the values that are connected to that position. This could mean a reflection about my values, and how those values were present in the research process. One of my main values is a radical notion of equality in which everyone should have opportunity to decide about their lives and their community, and have equal access to resources. As part of the notion of radical equality, I also see a need to undo power hierarchies in the society. These values were challenged many times due to my asymmetrical position in the school as a researcher. Murphy and Dingwall (2007) state: "Questions about the right way to treat each other as human beings, within a research relationship, are not wholly distinct from questions about the values which should prevail in the society, and the responsibility of social scientists to make, or refrain from, judgments about these" (p. 339).

3.2.4 Intervening in the field

One of the more challenging ethical questions was about bullying, especially in the context of how much the researcher should intervene in the field. Bullying especially made me reflect on my position as a researcher in the field as there were many occasions when I had to decide whether I should intervene or not. Dennis (2018) proposes that intervening in a bullying situation is an ethical act. She does not see a contradiction in intervening as in any case, the ethnographers are intervening when they are in the field, thus intervening in bullying incidents is only one form among many of intervening and so it is not unethical. From time to time, I was not sure if my intervention would be of any help to the student. One can also hesitate and concentrate on what is happening and to stop and try to understand it. Kofoed and Staunae (2015) propose that "Hesitancy thus means a momentary suspension of action due to an embodied sense of thoughtfulness and engaged capability of interrupting one's own immediate incentives to respond and enact embedded normativities and judgements" (p. 25). This could mean that researchers might not understand the actual situation in which they are interfering or what consequences their interference might have. Kofoed and Staunae (2015) challenge quick answers to problems and propose that research based on hesitancy can provide new insights to the problems over a longer time frame.

When observing bullying situations, I sometimes intervened, particularly when I thought that the situation was truly damaging to the person being bullied. Sometimes I stayed as an observer, even though it was difficult in the situations when there were other adults present, or I had the impression that my intervention would do more harm than good. In one case, there was a situation in which a student was mocked in a subtle way, by asking for her social media pseudonym, and then after seeing the pictures in her account, the others made fun of her and of her pictures. However, the bullying was done in such a subtle way that the student who was bullied did not understand that they were being ridiculed. As the bullying was so subtle and the victim was not totally aware of it, I decided that it would do more harm to intervene than not. Most of the times I intervened in more subtle ways, for example, by talking with the student who was being bullied. In most of the cases other students would not intervene as the bullied student was nearly completely excluded from the student community. I also discussed things with the bullied student after the occasion of bullying and made it clear that the other students were doing something that was not right. Furthermore, I tried to speak with some of the school staff. I also found another way of interfering when students were verbally attacked because they were called gay. On one of these occasions when student was called gay, I said to the student, when we were alone that there is nothing wrong about being gay, and nobody has the right to make assumptions about one's sexuality and even less to use it as a weapon. The negotiation was difficult, and for each case I had to estimate the situation from different perspectives. I used the ethical principle that the students should not suffer any harm as a compass. However, then it is a difficult question what is counted as harm, and whether my intervention would cause even more harm as I might not know the logic behind the situation and the behavior of the students.

There were times when I had to decide whether I should react as an 'official' adult, and even in those moments I tried to negotiate my role. There was a situation in which two boys started a fight and as I was the only adult in the situation, I went to the teachers' lounge to announce that there is a hassle, but I did not mention the names of the students involved in the situation. As I thought that my role wasn't to point out the culpable, but only to end the situation. It is hard to say what was the right thing to do, but I tried to follow my notion of ethical actions. Dennis (2018) states that: "...the conceptualization of research ethics...centers on the researcher responding to a particular situation in ways that the researcher herself can recognize as ethical according to their understanding of the situation, her particular theoretical orientation, her relationships with the community and so forth" (p. 61). In some cases, the intention to speak with someone from the staff did not work well. In one case I tried to speak with the school psychologist to bring forth the worrying situation with one student. When I was describing the situation (I did not mention the name of the student) the psychologist laughed and told me that she did not have experience with this kind of situation. Even though

she stated that she did not have experience, she said that the student should come to speak with her as she did not have enough information about the case. The psychologist didn't seem to take the issue very seriously, as she laughed and rolled her eyes during the conversation. Afterwards it came to my attention that the visit with the school psychologist had not ended the problematic situation.

I was very careful with what I told the school staff even though many of them responded with an attitude of genuine concern for the students. However, there were others who did not take the issues of bullying or exclusion very seriously. Also, in many cases, the students told me about their problems and asked me not to tell the staff, as they did not trust them. Hence, the hardest task in and out of the fieldwork was to keep to myself the information about bullying or exclusion I had promised a student that I would not use in the research. The information haunted me, and many times followed me home. In one of the hardest cases, I had to share the information to ensure the safety of the student. In that case, the aid of the principal investigator was needed and helped me to solve the case. Through that case I realized that even if one intends to maintain hesitancy in the field, there are moments when the ethical and the legal pressure pushes us to take action.

3.3 Ethics

Above I approached ethics through the perspective of my positionality. In this section, I concentrate on procedures that have to do with ethical issues. All the participants were informed about the study and told how long the study would take, what the practicalities were and what rights the participants had (TENK, 2018) (APPENDIX 1-3– information letters and permission slips). Permission for undertaking the research was obtained from all the participants and from the guardians of students younger than fifteen years old, since they cannot give their assent without their guardians' consent (TENK, 2018) (APPENDIX 1 – permission slips for guardians). Also, the teachers were asked for their consent to participate in the research (APPENDIX 2 – permission slips for teachers). It was made clear that the students could leave the study at any time without any consequences. Confidentiality was guaranteed to all the participants, and it was implemented by using pseudonyms and leaving out possible identifying characteristics (TENK, 2018). As the ethnographer or researcher, one must do everything to protect the participants from harm, but at the same time it is equally important to be aware of and respect their rights (Murphy & Dingwall, 2007). The students were not given unrealistic expectations of the results, because research in social sciences seldom has immediate benefits for the participant (TENK, 2018). Especially considering the change group work, it was a challenge because the aim was that the students would propose changes to the school (to challenge marginalization and exclusion), so some of them had high expectations of the process. We then concentrated on

making it clear that the research project was limited and that we could achieve some goals, but not others.

The consent was asked for in written form from teachers, as well as the students and their guardians. As the theme of the research was marginalization at school, and we knew that this is a delicate theme, we aspired to be highly sensitive when asking for consent from the students. We felt that even to participate in a research project with this theme could result in exclusion in some cases (such as if students would be presented as being ‘marginalized’ for participating). When introducing the research to the school groups, we emphasized that this was a project for all the students interested in these themes or had witnessed these themes or even if they were interested in how research is done. This tactic was a success in a way that we got rich participation. I did not take notes on students who did not want to participate in the project.

In most research, information about the participants should not be published in a manner that would allow them to be recognized (TENK, 2018). Confidentiality was also a big issue even though the number of students that participated in the study was large, but there were still cases when a person might have been recognizable. That would have potentially hurt or damaged the students or teachers at risk of being exposed. We solved the issue of students being exposed by paying careful attention that would not be recognizable when we wrote about the project. In some cases, pseudonyms were gendered differently. To avoid harming the participants, we worked hard to ensure that ethical procedures were strictly followed.

3.4 The research process

The data I used consisted of material that was produced in two upper comprehensive schools in the capital region of Finland during a period of one and half years between 2013 and 2015. The schools in this study had student populations that varied from 400 to 450, with group sizes varying from 12 to 26. In the research project, 32 staff members and 48 students participated. At the beginning of the study, the students were 14 years old and were in the 8th grade. The socio-economic background of the students was mixed since the students came from a range of socio-economic residential areas. The ethnic and religious background of the students also varied, but slightly over half were ethnic Finns and belonged to the Evangelical Lutheran church. I did the fieldwork in one of the schools and I participated in classes, recesses, school events (Christmas party, spring party, celebration of independence, and anti-bullying event), school trips, and teachers’ term preparation events. I held information meetings for the students and teachers about the research, its themes and objectives and about how it would be done, and the rights of the participants. After the first phase of the research I also reported the first results about the study to the student groups and teachers. Three fieldworkers worked on the project during the research process. I worked in a school to which

we gave the pseudonym ‘Springfield’, and the two others worked in a school which was given pseudonym the ‘Oakfield’.

The research process consisted of three phases. In first phase, which took place in March-May 2013, I conducted interviews with the school staff. In the second phase, which took place during August-December 2013 and January-May 2014 (the students were in the eighth grade), I did participant observations and interviewed students. I also started group interviews with the students and a process we called the change work, which continued during August-December 2014. In the third phase, which took place in 9th grade, in January-May 2015, I finished the group interviews and the change work. I also presented the results of the group interviews to the teachers. We also worked with the students to make the changes (the change work) that they had proposed in the group interviews. In the last phase, I also started to read manuals and textbooks for social skills to contextualize the interviews with the teachers.



Figure 1. The timeline of the research process.

The first and second articles were based on teacher interviews from the two schools, but the student interviews and the participatory observations helped to form the themes of the two articles. The dataset I used for these two articles was produced at both schools. In the second article I used manuals and textbooks for social skills to contextualize the interviews. The third article was based mostly on observation notes that focused on the teachers and their actions, but they were enriched with data from focus group and student interviews. The dataset I used for the third article was from Springfield. The main focus in these three articles

was on the teachers. The student interviews worked as a broadened context in order to contextualize teacher interviews and observation notes.

3.5 Fieldwork

The basis for educational ethnography includes participatory observations about everyday life in ‘naturally occurring settings’ and long-term presence in one setting, being immersed into it and writing descriptions (Gordon, Holland & Lahelma, 2007; see also Emerson, Fretz & Shaw, 2007). During the fieldwork there were three fieldworkers (but only two at the same time)⁴. I was in the Springfield school, and my other two colleagues were taking turns in the Oakfield school. While I was in the field, I mostly observed classes and during recesses and lunch breaks, but also participated by talking with students during classes and recesses, and by intervening in some situations. I also went along on school trips and participated in school festivities. I spent one or two days a week in the field. I spent 55 days in the field in 2013-2014. At the same time as we were doing participatory observations in the schools, we also started interviewing teachers and students, and carrying out group interviews and change group work with students and teachers.

Participant observations are different from ordinary/day-to-day observation (Rojas Soriano, 1998). In the ordinary observations, the researchers are placed outside the group they are observing, and they do not take part in the lives of the people observed. However, in participatory observations, meaning that the researchers position themselves inside the group they are observing, the researchers comply with the formal and informal rules of the group and participate in different ways in the lives of the group that is being observed. Also, in those moments when the researcher is seemingly not participating and is ‘just’ listening, the researcher affects the situation (Tolonen, 2001). On most occasions, we observed the activities more actively during recesses and in group interviews and more passively during classes. In the classroom, we observed mostly from the back, and during recesses we observed or/and had discussions with the students.

3.5.1 Access to the field

Our ethnographic journey started with negotiations with various schools until we received positive responses from the two schools we studied. Earlier we received permission from the school district office. I started my journey in the school by meeting with the principal and then agreeing to have an information meeting with the teachers, as part of a bigger meeting at which they planned their school year. In these meetings I described the research project and gathered information about

⁴ Describing whole research project, I refer to three researchers, but when talking about specific production of data I refer only to myself.

teachers who were interested in participating in the research. After the meeting it was decided that the school would participate in the research, and I talked with various teachers. Some of the teachers were very interested and others kept distance from me, so I concentrated on those teachers who were interested. I also talked on various occasions with the teachers about the research project when I visited the teachers' lounge. These discussions with the teachers formed the base of the interviews with them. Afterwards when the fieldwork had started, I approached to some of those teachers who had seemed to be wary at the beginning and in some cases obtained permission to attend their classes.

We held information meetings with students before starting the participatory observations and interviews. At the information meetings, I presented the research and asked the students to fill in a form to tell us about issues related to our research themes and also to tell us if they were interested in participating in the study. At the information meetings we emphasized that exclusion is something that can touch every student, thus we were not looking for particularly marginalized or excluded students. We explained that the point of the research project was to research the points of view of the students about marginalization and what could be done to prevent it. It was also made clear that participation in this study was voluntary (APPENDIX 3 permission slips for students). We gathered permission from the guardians by sending them a letter with information about the research project and the permission slips which they could sign if they consented to their child participating in the research project. We also asked for assent from the students themselves in the case they wanted to participate in the research.

During the information meeting I explained about the research, how it would be conducted and that we would not use their names and that they would not be recognizable when we wrote about the project. We also stressed their right to withdraw at any time during the research. I explained how we planned to use the data. A few days after the information meeting, I started the fieldwork. At the beginning, I attended several classes and wrote fieldnotes from my observations. During recesses and at the beginning or end of the school day, I approached and asked if students would be interested in participating in the research. These discussions were informal and during the discussions I answered students' questions about the research. Some of the students said "no" to participation and some "yes". I tried to be respectful of the students' decisions and gave them space to feel free to say "no", and this gave the students agency over their own participation (see also Lapalainen, 2006a).

These initial meetings were the first steps in getting to know the students. Below I describe one of the first meetings with a student, and how she approached me when I was waiting for the information meeting to start:

I asked if she was a student from 8F and she answered “yes”. She asked if I was a teaching assistant and I said no that I was coming to do a research study. She asked where I had come from, and I told that I come from University of Helsinki from the Department of Behavioral Sciences. She said: “ah, you are like from CSI: Crime Scene Investigation, like they research human behavior”, I answered that it was a good example, even though we study school and education. (Research diary – Springfield)

The negotiation for entry was ongoing through the fieldwork-process. Lappalainen (2006a) describes how she let teachers understand that she could leave the classroom at any time, if her presence was perceived as being awkward. I also made sure that I asked the teachers if it was okay for me to attend their classes. I reflected on the fact that it was problematic that the students did not have the same option. Even in cases when the teachers accepted or even were interested in the research process, it was a continuous process of negotiations, since for a teacher it might be stressful to have a researcher observe the daily life in their classroom for a longer period (Rajander, 2010). In my case, this meant that I was cautious about entering a class if the teacher let me understand in some way that she or he would like to be alone with the students. I also asked the teachers every time when doing participant observations if it was okay to attend class.

3.5.2 Being in the field

When I started to attend the classes, the students were sometimes enthusiastic to have me in their class, but on other occasions, they openly showed their suspicion about my presence, such as asking if I was spying on them. My presence as an adult in the field was in some ways complicated as I was neither a teacher as other adults nor a teaching assistant. Teachers usually addressed me like one of them. I tried to distance myself of the teacher position: I spent less time in the teachers’ lounge than in the shared spaces, and I spent most of my time with students. This way of drawing a line between me and the teachers, not trying to act like a teacher, is quite typical in educational ethnographic fieldwork (Niemi, 2015; Lappalainen, 2007). It was my way to construct my role as not being one of the adults who could control the students, or who were explaining what different things meant. At the start, students expected me to behave as any other adult in the school, mainly through maintaining discipline, and it took some time before they started to believe that I was not there to keep a watch on them. I always stated that everything I saw was confidential and students would not be recognized from the research. I positioned myself clearly as a researcher, in order to be able to maintain enough distance between me and the students, so it would be possible for me to position myself as a ‘neutral’ adult and thus be able to talk and hang around with different student groups (Tolonen, 2001). As I was spending most of my time with

students, teachers who were talking in small groups would sometimes fall silent when I was nearby and sometimes the teachers started to talk to me in a very formal way.

As a way of managing occasions like this, like Lappalainen (2006a), I tried not to cause the teachers any trouble, and to become invisible to the teachers to some degree. I tried to sit in the back rows and to avoid talking with students during the classes as I did not want to bother the teaching or the teacher. I simply sought to become invisible to the teachers, and in a way I succeeded. Sometimes I failed as well, as I was perceived as being another adult who potentially would judge or be considered to help the teacher, for example, by watching the students when the teacher was away. There was also one occasion where a teacher thought I was a student.

Hence, even though I concentrated on listening and watching, I was aware that even my presence was affecting the situation. The reactions to me changed between curiosity and doubt (Tolonen, 2001). Sometimes keeping a distance was difficult because I did not know beforehand which moments would be embarrassing for the students. There was an occasion when I was sitting on the 'boys' side' (the corridor was divided by gender) where male students were telling jokes. Suddenly the joking turned to themes of sexuality, and one boy – Farid – was the target of the jokes. When the sexually-loaded jokes began, the group of boys that was telling jokes started to notice that I was present, and to bully Farid even harder because of my presence, by telling even more sexually-loaded jokes and mentioning my presence connected to them. Farid was notably embarrassed, and I was unsure if it would be better that I left, or would that make the situation even worse. We were saved by the bell as the class started. Situations like that made me reflect on how my presence could be harmful for a student but also how that moment opened up some important questions about gender in this setting.

I tried to pay equal attention to the talk of girls and boys (understanding those as social constructions) and to different groups in school. However, forming connections with students was often also intuitive: for example, it was easy to make contact with a group of 'alternative' or 'punk' girls that were 'outsiders' (at least partially by their own will) from the student body. I met them on the first day of participatory observations, and because of my tattoos and piercing it was easy to start talking to them, as they also had piercings and were interested in my tattoos. They and a few other students came to be very important informants as they explained the use of the spaces and relations between different groups and students. In some cases, the opportunity to connect with students came in unexpected ways and in unexpected places. One of the informants was a student that was described by the teachers as being at risk of being marginalized. I did not have contact with this student in the school, but we met outside the school at a musical event, and it surprised us both and it became a common memory that we shared and discussed many times afterwards. After this encounter, we talked in school and the student

showed me the unofficial spaces and the ways to avoid classes, among other things. I also discussed some parts of my life with students, (in one occasion during the Spanish class, I told them that I had lived for a long period in Mexico) as I thought it would not be fair not to share anything, when I asked others to share some issues that could be highly personal.

I made an effort to blend in as much as I could as an adult. It was often uncomfortable to find my place in the school. It was not obvious where to sit in the classroom and during recess, whose table to join during lunch break. I re-lived some of the memories of my own time in upper comprehensive school. Some days it was a struggle to arrive at school, classes felt long and boring and from time to time, it was hard to sit still in class.

Sometimes the limits of the research were not clear. I sometimes saw students outside the school and we had interesting conversations. However, I decided not to include those conversations in my data because it was not clear if the students thought that those moments were also to be included in the research. Sometimes those meetings were important for connecting with the students later on.

3.5.3 Fieldnotes

Fieldnotes form a part of ethnographic writing process and overlap with other parts of ethnographic research "...as the ethnographer carries them out in similar time periods as experiments in literacy description and analysis" (Jeffrey, 2018, p. 116). I wrote fieldnotes in my notebook in different locations in the school. In the classrooms, I was able to write fieldnotes simultaneously while observing the class. Sometimes when I passed time with the students during recesses or in the school yard, I wrote my notes afterwards, when I got the opportunity (Emerson, Fretz & Shaw, 2007). I used parentheses to separate my interpretations, and feelings as in the example below:

Teacher: Heikki, where is your backpack?

Heikki does not answer anything but smiles and stares at his desk (own: he seems embarrassed). (Fieldnotes, Springfield)

It was easier to write in the classroom when everyone else were occupied with other things than during recess when I was the only one writing. Sometimes the students were interested in my writing and I explained to them what I was writing and why, and as they got used to it, they weren't so curious anymore. It was impossible to quickly write enough to capture the complex happenings and context, and to record as much as I wanted of the events and discussions in the school (Rajander, 2010). Therefore, I tried to write down (transcribe) my notes the same day, but they accumulated and at some point, I had a delay in doing the transcription of the notes. On those occasions when I could not transcribe the fieldnotes on

the same day, it was important that I had made detailed descriptions in the field. I also made some firsthand interpretations. In some cases, it was impossible for me to write at the same time, when I was interacting with students between classes or when I was in the canteen.

The things that are included or excluded in the fieldnotes are influenced by what the ethnographer sees as significant (Jeffrey, 2018). What is included is framed and presented in specific ways (Emerson, Fretz & Shaw, 2007). In the case of my fieldnotes, there were so many things happening at the same time, that it would have been impossible to write everything down. Meanwhile, I was writing down keywords and key sentences to be elaborated on later, I was doing selection based on what I saw as important to be written down, sometimes this 'choosing' was more conscious and at other times, more intuitive. More importantly, my research questions, theoretical framework, expectations and constructions (such as what is a student or a boy or bullying) affected what I saw as significant. These decisions or selections of what to write and how to write and whose reality is presented in the writings are essential questions in case of fieldnotes (Jeffrey, 2018). The fieldnotes are not facts about the reality that shows the reality. It is more like a production of fieldnotes, a process of interpretation and selection (Lappalainen, 2006; Emerson, Fretz & Shaw, 2011). The intention of text and interpretations is not only to document what is going on, but also to put into use alternative ways of thinking about the educational practices in school (Bertely, 2000).

At the beginning I made participatory observations of both formal and informal occurrences both in- and outside the classroom. The focus was in the interaction between students and between teachers and students. After pondering on the first fieldnotes, my gaze started to concentrate on the more informal occurrences, but I still observed the formal occurrences to some degree. An interesting point was when the interviews with the students started and when the first themes emerged from the point of view of the students. The participatory observations brought forward some contradictions within themes such as bullying. Although the students and teachers in the interviews said that they were against bullying, my fieldnotes tell about incidents where they participated in bullying. So, when they spoke about bullying, they were often giving socially acceptable answers, as the bullying is officially against the norms of the school and society. Even though they gave these socially-acceptable answers and opinions, students bullied or participated in bullying, like, by making faces behind victims of bullying or during the group interviews saying both directly and about the victims of bullying that it was their own fault that they were bullied. In the case of teachers, they ignored bullying or in some cases participated in bullying by getting angry at the victims of bullying when they were bullied. These contradictions are basically a question of different interpretations of bullying and even about how we define bullying (Juva, Holm & Dovemark, 2018).

There were several descriptions and interpretations of what happened and Emerson, Fretz and Shaw (2011) observed that "...there is no one "natural" or "correct" way to write about what one observes. Rather, because descriptions involve issues of perception and interpretation, different descriptions of similar or even the same situations and events are both possible and valuable" (p. 6). Based on my analysis of my descriptions in the field, I noted that there are several interpretations of what counts and who participates in bullying. Doing participatory observations, I did my own interpretations of all the processes and things said by students and teachers. I was aware that it is not possible to 'capture' the knowledge of others, but it is important to be aware of that one must treat the knowledge one encounters doing participatory observations with respect.

3.6 Ethnographic interviews

In the ethnographic interviews we interviewed the school staff and students about their perceptions of whether and why certain students are excluded from the school community, and others included; we also asked about their perceptions concerning normality. In this research project, we interviewed 25 teachers, three caretakers, two school psychologists, two welfare officers, and three teaching assistants. These interviews were conducted in spring 2013. The interviews lasted about 30-60 minutes and were conducted in the school or in an area nearby (for example, in a coffee shop). Interviews with the teachers were conducted mainly before or after the school day. The teachers who were interviewed were those who had showed an interest in participating in the research project first in the information meetings and afterwards when I asked in the teachers' lounge who would be interested in participating. As the teacher interviews were held at the beginning of the research, we did not yet have clear relationship with the teachers. We began with the teacher interviews before the participatory observations, with the intention of creating a context for the student interviews and participatory observations by examining themes that were recurrent in the teacher interviews.

We interviewed 48 students during the fieldwork, and the interviews took place mainly in spring 2014. The interviews lasted 60-90 minutes and were conducted in the school. The interviews with the students were mainly conducted during the school day and during classes. The student interviews were held after we had already started the fieldwork. Our observations shaped our questions and at the same time, the interviews affected our observations and helped us to open up the view for richness of different interpretations of situations. The interviews felt like an important way to communicate with the teachers and students. I talked with various students and teachers after and before the individual interviews to ask them if they wanted to participate in the group interviews.

What is essential for ethnographic interviews is the time spent in the field in order to secure the quality of the interviews (Tolonen and Palmu, 2007). The ethnographic interviews require time and an on-going relationship with the interviewees (Sherman Heyl, 2007). In the interviews, the actors themselves can present their interpretations of what has happened in the field (Tolonen & Palmu, 2007). Lappalainen (2006) describes the importance of ethnographic interviews by pointing out how the point of interest of the researcher becomes tangible to the students and teachers. Interviews can also make participatory observations deeper and broader as they allow researchers to question their observations and interpretations. The interviews with the teachers but even more importantly with the students helped me to note aspects I had not noted before during the participatory observations. The interviews could sometimes complement or even add more to the fieldnotes, but at the same time fieldnotes helped to maintain a critical view to the interview questions and answers (Skinner, 2012).

The first set of interviews included thematic areas that we used to interview the school staff (APPENDIX 4 interview guide for school staff) and students (APPENDIX 5 interview guide for students). The thematic areas were selected based on the research questions, earlier research and discussions in the research group, and they were influenced by the fieldwork. The thematic areas contained questions which were connected to marginalization, exclusion, outsiderhood, bullying inclusion and normality. The main theme of the interviews was marginalization, but we approached it from several angles. In the teacher interviews, we used an interview guide, which had as its main themes marginalization, belonging and outsiderhood, normality, difference/unusualness, students' background, discrimination, bullying, power relations, what teachers could do to prevent marginalization, what would they change in the school. With the students, we used an interview guide, with marginalization, exclusion, inclusion, and subthemes about normality, bullying, discrimination and group relations as the main themes. The interviews were semi-structured. We used a set of interview themes with detailed in-depth questions for each theme. In some cases, the individual teacher or student answered very briefly so the more detailed in-depth questions were of great help. In some cases, the discussions based on the themes and on the main questions flowed more freely and my role was more to introduce more themes or pose some more questions. On many occasions, important topics came up in the free discussion.

Finding the time and place for interviews was a challenge. The teachers were busy with their teaching and planning classes, and in their free time, they had other things to do. The school had all its spaces in full use, so it was quite difficult to find a room for the interviews. On some occasions, we had to go back and forth in the corridors with the students before we found a suitable place. With the teachers it was a bit easier because they often had informal information about what space could be used. In the case of the students, they couldn't decide over their time as freely as the teachers. I always asked the student first if the time for the

interview was okay, and then I asked the teacher if it would be okay for the student to miss the class. Sometimes students declined, pointing out that they had an exam coming, or the teacher declined by saying that the student had missed too many classes in the subject.

I wrote notes during the interviews in case there was a technical malfunction. I used these notes to form a general picture of the interviews before they were transcribed. The interviews were transcribed, and in the transcription process, we marked pauses and in some cases sounds like ‘hmm’, laughter or sighs with parentheses.

3.6.1 Group interviews and change group work

We also conducted group interviews that were then followed by change group work. The group interviews took place mainly in fall 2014 and in spring 2015. Parts of the group interviews were done during the field work and other parts after the fieldwork. The group sessions with students and teachers included both group interviews and change group work. Thirty-nine students participated in the group interviews and change group work. The group interviews were followed by change group work, during which the idea was that the students could pinpoint the main themes considering exclusion and marginalization and then suggest measures that could be taken to change the situation or the reasons behind exclusion and marginalization. The questions used in the group interviews were based on the themes from the individual interviews. (APPENDIX 6 group interviews) For the change group work, the structure was based partly on the thematic areas and partly on the minutes of the earlier change group work meetings. The themes that showed up as important in the student interviews and in group interviews were then formulated as themes for change group work.

We formed the groups for the group interviews and for the change group work based on those students who wanted to participate, and we also asked them with whom they would like to form a group. The groups were therefore mainly formed by the students who wanted to work together. I had one mixed group in which there was a student who had not found a group. The mixed group did not work as well as the other groups. The other students did not include the ‘outsider’ student, even though I tried to encourage them to include the student that came from outside their friend group. At Springfield, there were four groups of three to five students which had approximately four sessions: the first session was the group interviews and the following sessions were change group work sessions. At Springfield, there was also a group of teachers who reflected on the students’ propositions and how these propositions could be put into practice. The group of four teachers met three times, once for the interview and twice for the change group work.

At Oakfield, there were seven groups of two to four students, and seven individuals (who worked with the researcher) and they met once for the interview. At both Springfield and Oakfield, there were 28 teachers, one teaching assistant and two school counseling personnel. Thirteen teachers from both schools participated in the group interviews and in the change group work, with nine of them participating with the students and other four as a separate group. The group interviews lasted 30-60 minutes. They were conducted during the school day. We had students from six teaching groups from each of the schools, three groups from each school. One of the teaching groups was a special education class.

The initial idea at both schools was to have teachers participating in the meetings. However after one try with one group at Springfield, it was clear that students did not express themselves freely when a teacher was present. Group interviews and change group work were recorded and after each time I took the minutes for the session and they were given to students at the beginning of the new session. The students made lists in the change group work meetings about things they wanted to change and those list (with the permission of the students) were brought to teachers. The lists were presented during an information meeting of the teachers. The student groups continued to work and a few practical suggestions were made and one of them was carried out at the end. I did not use the group interview data in the three articles, but I used it to contextualize the teacher and student interviews and the observation data.

3.7 Manuals and textbooks

I analyzed six manuals and textbooks (Keltikangas-Järvinen, 2010; Kauppila, 2005; Laine, 2005; Salmivalli, 2005; Pulkkinen, 2002; Kalliopuska, 1995; Poikkeus, 1995) used in the field of educational psychology to contextualize teachers' constructions about social skills. In many cases, these manuals and textbooks were used to conceptualize social skills in Finnish master's theses and dissertations. The manuals and textbooks consisted of four manuals/handbooks, one textbook and one non-fiction popular science book. Together they formed one dataset, since they affected how teachers understood the concept of social skills. These manuals and textbooks were significant because they are part of the literature frequently used in professional training and teacher education. Through my analysis I deconstructed the notion of social skills in the manuals. The manuals are targeted mainly at educators and guardians and they are written by scholars, professionals, teachers and psychologists. I used these manuals to contextualize teacher interviews in my second article.

3.8 Analytic process and strategies

The process of analysis began when I started to form the first research questions by discussing them with the other members of the project and by reading the theory of normality and exclusion and by forming my first conceptualizations of normality. When I started to work with the research questions, I also formed the first ideas about what I could concentrate on in the interviews or in the field, such as regarding episodes of exclusion. Being in the field in many cases changed or influenced my ideas. Afterwards, data also influenced the framework and caused me to think about the research questions from new perspectives. The process of analysis underlines that there is no clear beginning or end to the analysis process I used (see also Tolonen, 2001, Bertely, 2000).

The methodological and theoretical sides of research always become interrelated within the analysis. It is possible to use different theories in analysis, as they widen the perspectives from which the data are read (Niemi, 2014). To capture the different sides how normality was constructed I used a variety of theoretical perspectives from different theoretical fields. This dialogue between data and theory is something typical for ethnography (Niemi, 2014).

When I read the teacher interviews, I began to form the first codes and then themes from those codes. I used those themes with theory in forming the questions for the students. The next step was to read the student interviews and to form the first codes and then the first themes. I used the codes and the themes from the teacher interviews as the context. Based on forming codes and themes from student interviews, I formed the questions for the groups. Students had mentioned that the adults did not intervene enough in bullying and that there was no point in telling adults about bullying. I asked those questions in the group interviews. I explained to the students that the questions for the group interviews were based on the earlier individual interviews with them. The last part of data that I read was the fieldwork data, group interviews and change group work meetings.

During the research process, I was reading theory connected to the themes that I constructed from the data. I chose the theory partially based on the data and partially based on the earlier research. The theory about normality was influencing what themes I saw as essential in the data, but the data also challenged the conceptualization of normality and theories of marginalization by directing me to themes that were not so strongly present in the theorizations. The concept of normality has had a special position in the process of my analysis. It has been the connecting theme for several parts of the data and the theoretical tools. The data have also challenged my constructions of normality and during the research process I have sought to deepen my understanding of the concept of normality. First, I understood normality as a sum of traits, such as whiteness, heterosexuality, masculinity. Then when the theme of normality was connected to the behavior and social skills in the data, I started to think of normality more as a way of being (that still includes specific traits). The understanding of normality as a concept has

grown during the process and gained new and different contact points to my data. An example would be normality which cannot be understood without the notion of not-normality or deviance. The connection between normality and processes of constructing not-normality became tangible when I observed how the teachers participated in the exclusion of students who were categorized as 'not-normal' by other students. At the same time, the concept of normality enabled me to observe the traits demanded for students to be understood as 'normal' and then avoid exclusion.

After the two rounds of reading the data, I started to get a general picture of the codes/themes. I then chose to concentrate on specific themes and to form the first versions of the articles. First, I concentrated on the data based on the teacher interviews (and used it for the first two articles) then the student and group interviews, and participant observation data (that I used in the third article).

When I had constructed the first codes/themes, I started another round of review of the theory. Reading the theory with the data and specifically in relation to the codes/themes I began to write more developed versions of the articles. For example, in the case of the third article I immersed myself in the theory of recognition (Davies, 2011) in relation to the moments that were coded as bullying, exclusion and normality. The purpose was to form an understanding of what was happening in that setting.

Theory can be used to defy the ordinary but at the same time data can defy theory (Mietola, 2014). This has been very important in my research as normality and 'normal' are constructed as part of the ordinary. I have used theory and the theoretical concept of normality to open up and examine how the normality is constructed as part of the ordinary. At the same time, the data have surprised me and made me seek other theoretical tools to understand the complexity of normality. The article format obligates the researcher to focus and choose the data carefully and to focus the analysis carefully (Niemi, 2015). I used normality as a lens to examine three different themes in my articles.

I understand the field I studied as a mix of the school, students and teachers but also my own writing in the form of notes and later, articles. In my analysis I use the notion of fields as described by Palmu (2007), who uses the concept (namely the physical field, the written field and the textual field) to describe the intertwined processes of data collection/production and analysis.

The first field is called the physical field. The field as a physical space is formed by the school and the students, teachers and the other staff (Palmu, 2007). The physical field is formed by participatory observations, my notes, my presence and my gaze. The theory was already present in this field in the form of the questions I posed to the school staff and the students. An important thing that directed my gaze was my theoretical lens.

The second field is the written field. All my documentation from the physical field, such as the documentation from the fieldwork (observation notes, recordings, interviews) forms the second field. All my observation notes and interview transcripts were part of this field. The process of reading the fieldnotes, the transcription of the interviews, as well as forming or coding the first categories, also formed part of this field (Palmu, 2007).

The third field is the textual field. Palmu (2007) explains how the interpretations, a selected portion of the analyses, categories, themes, data, and descriptions of the research process are brought together. The interpretations I did of the physical and written fields, together with the writing of the three articles, formed the third field – the textual field. As part of this field I went through my interview transcripts and observation notes, with the ATLAS.ti qualitative analysis program, which I used to form thematic categories after that I read the categories with the concept of normality and with theories that were connected to the concept. From this reading, I formed new categories. When using ATLAS.ti I referred to the thematic categories as ‘codes’. With the student interviews, I used 20 codes and 102 sub-codes; with the teacher interviews, 18 codes and 300 sub-codes; with the participatory observation data, 20 codes 72 sub-codes; and with the group interviews, 12 codes and 63 sub-codes. In my own research, I concentrated mainly on the themes or codes that were connected to normality and exclusion and sub-codes that were connected to whiteness/Finnishness, behavior/social skills and bullying. I used a combination between research questions, theoretical framework and participatory observations to produce the codes and later to concentrate on a few specific codes. My main code was ‘normality’, and then I checked which sub-codes or main codes were connected to ‘normality’. I decided to concentrate on the aspects of the construction of normality and not-normality that were mentioned most often in the interviews and in the fieldnotes.

This research forms one perspective or interpretation of the physical field and is thus also open to other interpretations (Palmu, 2007). Hakala and Hynninen (2007) underline how we use language and concepts in different ways to analyze or structure the world we perceive from particular points of view. They also state that our knowledge is always partial and tied to a specific situation. All the knowledge in research is produced during different meetings in the social realm, which are connected to time, place and communal discursive practices (Hakala & Hynninen, 2007). This positioning enabled me to understand throughout the research that my representations in my three articles only represent one interpretation of the issues connected to the specific context and time. Each article is a different interpretation of several complex and rich processes, and so each offers a process of analysis that can bring a specific and contextualized view to the data. Since in this research the ways to understand and construct normality and not-normality were important, the participatory observations helped me to understand

how these constructions, discussed in the interviews, were produced in everyday cultural practices in school.

4 The Results

In this chapter I, present the results in the form of the three articles on which my thesis is based. These articles together show how the construction of normality is connected to exclusion. Normality and exclusion are examined through different themes by using participatory observations and interviews. In Article 1 I concentrate on the issues of constructing Finnishness as normality. The article is based on interviews with teachers. In Article 2, I address the connection between social skills and normality based on interviews with teachers. In Article 3, the focus is on bullying and normality, and I mainly used participatory observations but also student and teacher interviews for the analysis. Articles 1 and 2 respond to the question, how do school staff and students perceive and construct normality and the ‘normal’ subject in the school? (RQ1) All three articles address the question, how does the categorization of students as ‘not-normal’ influence their position in the school? (RQ2)

The first two articles discuss the traits that are constructed as part of normality or not-normality. Those traits vary from whiteness and Finnishness to having a correct set of social skills, to the lack of those traits that can lead to students being categorized as ‘not-normal’. The third article examines the mechanisms of exclusion. Such as, bullying in which the teachers participate, these mechanisms are targeted at students who are categorized as ‘not-normal’. By categorizing students as ‘not-normal’ and by bullying them, these students are excluded from the school community.

4.1 Normality and Finnishness

In the first article, written with Gunilla Holm, we examined how teachers talk about normality and not-normality, and how they construct ‘normal’ and ‘not-normal’ students. The article drew on semi-structured in-depth interviews with twenty-eight teachers, one teaching assistant and two school counseling personnel. Teachers were asked about their perceptions of whether and why certain students are excluded, and others included, in the school community and how they personally understood normality. The article concentrated on the question of who can become Finnish and what the limits of Finnishness are. Finnishness was connected to normality in the teachers’ interviews. The focus was on how the school was constructed as an equal and neutral space for students. One of the starting points of the article was to describe how the Finnish school system has been constructed as based on equality. Equality is presented in official documents as one of the basic pillars of Finnish schooling. In official documents, equality is con-

nected to gender, ethnicity, ability and regional equality (FNBE, 2004). We questioned in this article if all the students can have equal status in the Finnish school, despite their background. Based on earlier research, there are limits on how equality is applied in the Finnish schools. Previous research has shown how the limited instructions for implementation of basic values, such as equality, hinder their implementation in teaching practice (Holm & Londen, 2010). Despite the limits of the implementation of the basic values, including also equality, it is supported and regarded as something important. Though equality is stated as being one of the main values in official documents and generally, earlier research challenges this view by pointing out that racism and discrimination with ethno-centrism and nationalism are an important part of everyday life in the school (Souto, 2010; Rastas, 2007). Historically, school has had an important role in producing citizens of the nation state, and thus Finnishness, by defining how they should be. Part of this was to produce a connection between students and a common culture, language, history of the nation and the notion of having “joint sense of future” (Gordon, Holland & Lahelma, 2000, p. 20). A ‘Finnish’ person is considered to be one who speaks Finnish and is white (Lehtonen, 2005; Rastas, 2007; Tuori, 2009). The expectation of whiteness is also underlined by Rastas (2007) and Tuori (2009). Also, part of being a ‘normal’ subject in a Finnish school is to be Finnish and that includes speaking Finnish and being white, as mentioned above. The connection to being ‘normal’ comes in the form of how the ordinary is associated with Finnishness in the school community (Tolonen, 2002). Historically, school was connected to eugenics and in this context normality was constructed, and some of the students, defined by their ‘race’ were classified as potentially problematic (Baker, 2002). Whiteness in this context is connected to the notion of ‘race’. The construction of Finnishness is then also a question of construction of whiteness and ‘race’. In the 19th century, Finnish scholars aimed to show that Finns were not part of the Mongolian ‘race’ (Ruuska, 2002), so ‘race’ has played an important role in the building of nationhood in Finland (Rastas, 2007). Still today, a connection between racism, Finnishness and whiteness exists in the Finnish school (Rastas, 2007).)

Even though the construction of Finnishness has been an important function of the school, and it has included the expectation of whiteness, teachers mainly described the school as culturally diverse and tolerant, and without discrimination. A part of this discourse of culturally diverse school was the idea that discrimination is a personal problem between individuals. In other words, racism was seen as a problem between individuals and not something that concerns the whole school or is rooted in structural issues. The process of individualization makes it possible to present exclusion or racism as personal problems and not as a structural process. To be ‘normal’ or ‘not-normal’ is then constructed as individuals’ own choice (Fahlgren, Johansson & Mulinari, 2011). Individualizing the differences

was part of maintaining Finnishness in the school as something ‘banal’ or ordinary, and thus through individualization it was possible to construct school as being equal and neutral ground for students. In this setting, where the equality is one of the leading principles, the differences between students are presented as differences between individuals, and not as differences between groups. In addition, discrimination based on ethnic background is also presented as conflicts between individuals and not as a structural problem (Gillies & Robinson, 2011).

Though discrimination was presented as conflict between individuals. The migrant and migrant background students were constructed as a group who shared negative traits. In the excerpt below, the teacher describes how having a culturally diverse crowd in the school affects what is considered to be racism.

Lea: We have a large multicultural crowd. Some might say that the Somalis are raising a ruckus again or something like that, but it feels like no one is offended. In my view it is not actually racism.

As the teacher brought up Somali students in the context of problematic behavior and racism, she made a connection between problematic behavior and migrant students as found in earlier research (Holm & Londen, 2010). At the same time, in the same excerpt the school was constructed as tolerant and multicultural space. Teachers used multiculturalism as a word to describe the migrant background students. These students’ opportunities to succeed were seen as limited by the teachers. The migrant students were seen to be more prone to marginalization. The students with migrant background who succeeded in schools were considered to be exceptions. Most often, teachers described the migrant background students as problematic and located the reason for their behavior in their culture. In the excerpt below, regarding migrant background students, the teacher explains how disturbing the class could be seen as typical for the students’ culture.

Meri: In some groups it feels like they are trying to make themselves more social but I don’t know if it comes from that they are people who want to be very social or if it is part of their culture...I don’t know if that’s it or they feel that they are marginalized otherwise. At least I have not seen or felt at any point that they would be marginalized but more that they like go for it...talking and things that disturb the teaching like talking with everybody and the use of space like that they shout to the other side of class...which might be characteristic of their culture.

The teacher described the marginalization of the student as it was based on what students feel, while underlining that she had not seen that they would be marginalized. In place of being marginalized, migrant and migrant background students are described as problematic in the classroom, because they disturb the

classes. The teacher explained the ‘problematic’ behavior of the migrant and migrant background students with their cultural background. In case of the Finnish students’ behavioral problems, they were constructed as individual issues, while the migrant and migrant background students were seen as part of a cultural group that was problematic to start with.

In the excerpt below the teacher describes the Finnish students as successful and the migrant background students as having problems.

Eini: In this school, good school success is valued. This is not valued in all schools...in this school those who manage are valued. There have been clashes between the sporty, successful, Finnish, born in Finland students and then the students with immigrant background who struggle with the language and with other problems...They cannot stand each other. Just a look is enough to make the other feel completely useless. When it was investigated, it’s only a question about one’s own feeling, how does it feel for me here. Or in this school youngsters who come from traditionally good families, from caring families and who succeed and otherwise engaged students are valued.

In the excerpt above, the teacher describes Finnish students with positive traits such as being successful. Meanwhile, migrant and migrant background students are constructed as struggling and potentially problematic. The process of constructing the migrant and migrant background student is essential in the construction of Finnishness as normality. The Finnishness then is maintained through constructing those that do not have correct traits as ‘other’ (Gordon, Holland & Lahelma, 2000) in this case, the ‘struggling’ migrant and migrant background students. Hence, through naming the ‘other’ which might mean migrants and migrants background persons, the ‘us’ as the ‘Finnish’ is also named (Lempiäinen, 2002). Also, the “other” or “them” are constructed as fundamentally different (Lappalainen, 2006b) as in this case the Finnish students are constructed as successful and migrant and migrant background students as the opposite. Naming migrant and migrant background students as ‘not-normal’ does not actually describe the traits of the students named as ‘not-normal’, but more about the society and what is constructed as deviant in a certain period. Behind categorizing someone as deviant is the intention to control that someone does not differ too much from cultural norms (Silvennoinen & Pihlaja, 2012). In this case, migrant and migrant background students are seen as breaking or differing from the cultural norms. Control can include different manners, such as discouraging and restrict the use of languages other than Finnish. As the migrant and migrant background students are seen as ‘not-normal’ the teachers position them below other students as they underline how those successful students – in this case, Finnish students – are val-

ued in the school. Even when the teachers recognize that there are groups of students who are constructed and valued in a different way, they do not recognize the conflict between different groups as something that have to do with the hierarchies in the school, but underline that it is a question of the feeling of individual students.

Migrant and migrant background students' language background were seen as an obstacle to integration. Meanwhile, the Finnish language was seen as important part of integration. Language had an important position in defining the limits of Finnishness and in representations of Finland. However, in many cases migrants learning the language is not enough for migrants to become part of the category of Finnishness (Lepola, 2000). Language was only a one of the differences that positioned migrant and migrant background students outside Finnishness. Social relations with ethnic Finns or Finnish-speaking students were seen as a resource. Meanwhile, not having those relations was seen as a potential problem or a reason for marginalization. Good social relations with other migrant background students were rarely seen as a positive resource, but instead as something that could even lead to isolation from the Finnish society. Generally, being a migrant student or a student with a migrant background was rarely connected to inclusion but rather to exclusion. As part of the exclusion was the demand to be more Finnish. We pointed out in our analysis that considering the Finnish students as unproblematic and the migrant and migrant background students as problematic creates hierarchical power relations in the school.

Teachers described the migrant students as categorically behaving 'badly'. The 'bad' behavior was explained with them being migrant students or with their culture, and teachers did not consider that the behavior could be connected to some structural reasons or to something related to the school. In case of the ethnic Finns, the 'bad' behavior was considered to be an individual problem, while in case of the migrant and migrant background students it was seen as a problem related to the cultural group as a whole (Riitaoja, 2013; Lappalainen, 2009). There was a tendency in the school to categorize students based on their ethnic background. We used the notion of cultural racism which is a form of racism where the word race is replaced with culture, so the hierarchies that were constructed between races in classical racism are now based on cultural difference. And the cultural differences or ethnic identities are constructed as essentialist categories, meaning that they do not change, and they are clearly demarcated, and hybrid forms are not possible (Grosfoguel, 2007). Cultural racism is used to justify the lower position in the hierarchy of migrants by presenting them as an essentialist category which shares traits that lead to them being culturally different (Grosfoguel, 2007). In this case, migrant background students were constructed as an essentialist category whereas for ethnic Finns, a more individualized approach was applied.

The migrant and migrant background students were seen not only as an essentialist category but also as a problematic group, especially if they resisted the integration into the school culture. In the excerpt below, the teacher explains how the school culture should be more important than belonging to any specific culture.

Leevi: And in our school, I know that in the upper comprehensive school there have been a situation where the Russians are against Somalis and for me it speaks of the weakness of the school's own culture. I don't criticize at all...but in a way the experience of belonging in school should be more important than belonging to the Russian students or the Somali students.

Above, the belonging to an ethnic group is seen as something problematic. Being part of the Russian or Somali students (who in many cases have been born in Finland) underlines that there is a unified school culture to which students should belong. What is not mentioned is that the school culture is based on the Finnish culture. Belonging to the school is considered to be more important than belonging to any ethnic group. By requiring students to belong to the school culture, the teacher constructs the idea of the school as a neutral place without ethnic identities. The idea of school as a 'normal' space is connected to eugenics and to the construction of the 'normal' student and human being. The construction of 'normal' human being or student has never been neutral from the point of view of cultural or ethnic differences. The average person or the 'normal' population included only certain national or racial types with certain characteristics. Whiteness was an important feature of normality (Hacking, 1990). The population, in this case students, was compared to the 'normal', and by measurement, some students are categorized as 'normal' and others 'not-normal' (Helen, 2016). Hence, Finnish identity became visible at those times, when somebody differed from what was taken for granted and considered to be 'normal'. As part of constructing normality, teachers constructed non-Finnish identities as problematic, and at the same time, Finnishness was taken for granted and not even recognized as an identity. With this I mean that the cultural markers of the Finnish identity, such as the language, were taken for granted and naturalized to such an extent that Finnishness was no longer seen as an identity but more like normality, how a 'normal' person is. Those students who differed from this 'normal' were considered to be problematic and 'not-normal' and at risk of marginalization.

In the excerpt below, a teacher explains how the students are at risk of being marginalized because their identification is outside Finnishness.

Virpi: Then there is a more subtle outsider-ness somehow. When you think that here where we have so many cultures in the school, they [migrant background students] define themselves so strictly, even those who

were born in Finland, they define themselves and their identities through the nationality of their parents. And in that way a very strong marginality is created for many [students] where the margin can be even a [numerical] majority but inside the students' heads can exist a very strong conception of that they are outside of what is Finnish or Finnishness.

The teacher constructs marginalization as an issue of individualization, as the students do not define themselves as part of the Finnishness. Students' sense of belonging to nations other than Finland is not seen as a resource but as something that leads to marginalization. Even when the migrant and migrant background students are in the majority, they are presented as marginal, because they feel that they are outside Finnishness. The teacher attributes the problem to the students' incapacity to integrate rather than to the school's limited capacity to accept anything other than Finnishness. Teachers explained how the school would be an equal place for all if ethnic identities did not exist. Then, being part of the school would be more important than being part of any ethnic identity. In this way it would be possible to guarantee equality for the students, as they are not positioned in any hierarchies based on their ethnic identity. The problem with this notion of the school as empty of identities is that Finnishness is not counted as an ethnic identity. So, there would be no problem to bring the Finnish identity to the school, as it is seen as the normal identity and part of the normality.

The teachers explained the Finnish students' behavior as individual behavior, unlike the migrants' and migrant background students' behavior, which was explained in relation to the culture or the group that they were 'representing'. Still, as the teachers had different expectations and categorizations for the students with different ethnic backgrounds, there was a demand for the students to fit into the majority, Finnish culture. Finnish culture was seen as the normality in the school. The school was constructed as an equal place for all the students, but the equal in this context meant Finnishness. Part of the notion of an equal school was the idea that it is a place where the students compete as abstract individuals in a neutral setting. While considered as a neutral position, Finnishness as normality also includes the idea of an ideal subject; it does not only describe the average or ordinary. In the interviews with the teachers, students were understood as an abstraction. And the differences between students were seen as equal and not hierarchical because the student is presented as an abstraction. As an abstraction, the student is not seen as having a background that could include social class. This imaginary subject, being student or worker, can be seen as neutral and universal and without any specific history or context (Echeverría, 2007). This process of constructing a subject that appears to be without context and history is connected to how schools can be presented as neutral spaces and without an ethnic identity and so that the hegemonic position of specific cultures is not recognized (Echeverría, 2007; Apple, 2004).

The teachers defined what Finnishness is in the interviews, as a part of defining normality and not-normality in the school. The school staff strengthens then the school's affinity by defining what is 'normal' and what is 'not-normal'. When the migrant and migrant background students were presented as being different from Finnish students, it made possible to construct Finnishness. The construction of nation as normality becomes clearer when the nation or 'us' is compared to 'them' who do not form part of the nation (Billig, 1995). The whole process of constructing the nation or 'us' or citizenship is connected to the notions of 'race', correct ethnicity and Finnishness (Tuori, 2009; Rastas, 2007; Lepola, 2000). To consider one as not belonging to Finnishness is also to define one as 'not-normal', and by defining what is 'not-normal', the 'normal' is defined (Rinne, 2012). To be constructed as 'them' means that the student is constructed as 'lacking' something. Lack of Finnish-speaking friends or the Finnish language were mentioned among the reasons for marginalization. One part of Finnishness as normality is based on intuitive knowledge about what is 'normal' or what is Finnishness. Normality and Finnishness can be then seen as being "...silent knowledge, in which one is socialized through education and memberships of communities" (Lehtonen, Löytty & Ruuska, 2004). As the construction of nation is based partly on silent knowledge, it makes it easier to present Finnishness as 'normal' or 'ordinary'. Thus, in the context of school, school staff and students can see Finnishness as being so obvious or 'banal' that it does not need to be emphasized or even mentioned, except in those cases when the self-evidence (or normality) is challenged (see also Billig, 1995). Even though there would be students with a range of backgrounds, the idea of one common culture can go unchallenged as the Finnishness is perceived as being 'banal' (Tolonen, 2002). By constructing Finnishness as normality or 'banality' and by connecting normality with specific behavior, teachers create hierarchies between students depending on how well they can fulfill the conditions of normality. The migrant students are not welcome to construct an ethnic or national identity other than Finnishness, but at the same time they are not recognized as Finnish. The Finnish identity is not recognized as an ethnic identity and the other ethnic/cultural/social groups are seen as a possible problem and a reason for conflict. This is part of constructing the school as a culturally empty or neutral space, even though at the same time it is presented as a multicultural space.

4.2 Normality and social skills

In the second article, written with Touko Vaahtera, we examine how certain social skills are acquired to become a 'normal' student in the schools. The article is a chapter in the book, *Troubling educational cultures in the Nordic countries* and it addresses how the teachers and other school personnel construct a 'normal' student. The school staff described that to be counted as 'normal', student is expected

to have 'correct' social skills such as to be autonomous, to be able adapt and to recognize the limits of 'correct' behavior. Also, the 'correct' social skills include processes of individualization. The article is based on the interviews conducted at Springfield and Oakfield and the interview data are contextualized with manuals and textbooks for social skills.

In the field of educational psychology in Finland, social skills appeared as part of the research in the 1970s. Social skills are often part of the wider research on social competence (Pulkkinen, 2002). Earlier research in Finland concentrated on themes such as teaching social skills in schools (Mäntynen, 2007; Pulkkinen, 2002; Hynninen, 1999). One of the main themes internationally connected with social competence and social skills is how students' lack of social skills can mean future problems with mental health, learning disabilities and marginalization (Maag, 2006; Hansen et al., 1998; Parker & Asher, 1987). Problems such as marginalization due to the lack of social skills were also present in Finnish research (Hiltunen & Perälä, 2011; Ristimäki, 2011; Mäntynen, 2007), and also in the manuals that conceptualized social skills. (Keltikangas-Järvinen, 2010; Kauppila, 2005; Laine, 2005; Salmivalli, 2005; Pulkkinen, 2002; Kalliopuska, 1995 & Poikkeus, 1995). When I analyzed the manuals and textbooks, I noticed that the interaction that was recognized as part of social skills should not disturb the functioning of the school. I decided to problematize the earlier notion of social skills by analyzing what was meant by social skills and what kind of student was constructed through the 'correct' social skills. The manuals I analyzed included six books, which were significant because they were used as examples in teacher education of conceptualizing social skills in the field of educational psychology in Finland. The manuals were thematically analyzed with the interviews. In the manuals, social skills were connected to the expectation of efficiency, in the form that students could always choose the best option for behavior for the situation they are in. Overall, the teachers' talk of the construction of 'correct' social skills is highlighted as important in order to function with other students and teachers without causing problems. One of the themes repeated in the manuals (which we used to contextualize the article), and also in the interviews with school staff, was the importance of 'correct' behavior. 'Good' or 'correct' behavior was presented in the manuals/textbooks and interviews as having the ability to know how to behave at school and in the future work place. Connected to the capacity to act in the 'correct' way is the notion of 'a professional pupil' meaning a student capable of acting willingly in a 'correct' manner (Leino & Lahelma, 2002; Braun, Maguire & Ball, 2010). Willis (1977) pointed out the connection between fulfilling the norms and having a good or respectful job in future. This is connected to a social political demand for school to create active and responsible subjects for labor markets, subjects who would know how to behave in correct ways in the work place and in the labor market (Julkunen, 2006; Miller & Rose, 2010). One trait of an

active and responsible subject was to be able to be autonomous, which was pointed out as being a necessary student trait.

In the excerpt below, the teacher describes how a 'not-normal' student is not able to take care of their own school work. In this way, she points out how the 'normal' student should be autonomous.

Ursula: ...someone who can independently study, can do group work, can take care of school work and homework, when needed to can be in contact with classmates and to ask for homework. The not normal student does not send a message, or even worse the mother sends a message and asks for homework. The student needs to be able to take care of their own school work.

Above, the teacher makes a division between the 'normal' and 'not-normal' student, by defining how a 'normal' student should be able to behave and to communicate. There are expectations such as that every student does have a contact to the classmates (which was not correct in some cases in the studied schools). Also, the most negative course of action is that the student is helped by their parent when they must communicate with the teacher. Hence, there is a demand for autonomy for each individual student. To be able to be autonomous was constructed as a trait of the 'normal' student. In earlier research it was pointed out that normality includes traits that are considered as 'ideal' in the society, such as the capability to be autonomous. To expect certain kinds of behavior from students to be defined as 'normal' is a continuation of Galton's idea of normality that includes the notion of an 'ideal' human being (Davis, 1995). The traits which are connected to normality are not only average traits, rather they are the traits that are valued in the society.

In the article we argue that the demand to be autonomous is connected to the tendency to see the students as individuals, who nevertheless behave in a uniform way. This means that a contradiction of expectations exists for the students to be individuals and at the same time to behave in similar ways. The teachers did not bring up collaboration, or mutual aid as 'correct' forms of social skills. Quite contrarily, the teachers pointed out that the students were expected to be autonomous to be considered as having 'normal' social skills. Thus, those students who struggle with managing their school work autonomously were considered to be 'not normal'. The autonomous individuals are expected to manage the school work on their own. Hence other forms of social behavior were referred to in a limited way. For example, collaboration is present mainly in how the students are expected to get along with others, and to work together in teaching situations. Generally, social skills in manuals/textbooks underlined obedience more than co-operation (Salmivalli, 2005). We pointed out that categorizing certain traits such as to be autonomous as 'normal', is part of a larger historical process whereby capitalist

commonsense assumes that individuals are driven by self-interest (Hall, 1996). Hall (1996) speaks of the idea of a society in which other individuals are not co-operating nor “driven by goodwill, or love of his neighbor or fellow feeling to succeed in the market game”, but rather the market requires that people act in their own self-interest (Hall, 1996, p.33). Thus, the autonomous individuals do not seek to cooperate, rather they compete with each other.

Adaptability was a theme that occurred frequently in both the interviews and the manuals/textbooks. In the excerpt below, Virpi underlines the importance to be able to adapt:

Virpi: ...a normal student is a student who reacts in a properly indifferent way to all things (laughs) in their lives. Also, toward school work, so that they don't show too much passion in any direction. And also dresses up so that the clothes are similar to what the others have. [Normal students] show somehow that kind of positive attitude toward school like one's own place and even as work place... And definitely one doesn't open their mouth in case there is a dispute to somehow express that one thinks differently about something or to defend someone weaker. So, it is very adapt(able)...normal (student) is very adaptable being from my point of view.

In the quote above the teacher points out how the ‘normal’ student is not necessarily overly enthusiastic. It is more important to show indifference toward formal and informal school, but at the same time, it is important to have a “positive attitude toward school as a place where one works”. The capacity to adapt to the school includes the request for a student to be able to manage their behavior in a way that one does not disrupt the functioning of the school. One must maintain a professional attitude towards school as a workplace while also maintaining a neutral position towards the school work and towards the other students.

The teacher then explained how the ‘normal’ student is a very adaptable being who does not want to differ too much from other students and is capable of not showing any behavior that somehow differs from other students’ behavior. We noticed that the members of the school staff also shared this notion of normality as a capacity to adapt to one’s environment. The demand to adapt raised the question about what specific requirements are necessary for the student to be capable of adapting. The idea of normalizing, making students identical to a specific model, is an essential part of schooling (Warner, 1999). And the construction of normality also includes the ideal of how a student or human being should be (Davis, 1995; Hacking, 1990). Thus, the capability to adapt to the rules and regulations of the school was one of the main norms of the behavior, which meant basically that the students should not cause any problems.

There is also the question of how one adapts in a specific context. To go against the accepted social skills and supposed normality can also lead to new ways of being that may defy normality. Canguilhem (2007) suggest a different way for how normality could have emerged in science. The pathology in place of thinking it as "...the normal mode of life minus something which have been destroyed..." could be seen in place of lacking something, to have a new order, and thus become radically different from the normal state it departed (Canguilhem, 2007, p. 184). Canguilhem (2007) suggests that in place of presenting pathology as being different from 'normal', it could be seen as bringing a new arrangement, such as new ways of adapting to one's environment. Variations of the norm should be embraced because different ways of being "can become new norms" (Warner, 1999). Then, being healthy is not being 'normal', or in the normative state, but it means to be able to adapt and change. We then point out that those students who do not fulfill the ideals of capitalist commonsense, such as flexibility and autonomy, can then bring out new types or modes of social skills.

The school staff also pointed out the importance of knowing the limits of 'correct' behavior. In the excerpt below, Raakel describes how students should behave in the school context.

Raakel: ... students might not see the difference that between being at home or (laughs) or somewhere else...But also it could be at some point like, like to understand a bit that it is a strange adult and one may not say straightforwardly like in home one says...it can be in that one is too open and somehow comes too close.

Raakel described how a student talks too openly or straightforwardly to the teacher and that the student should know the limits of behavior in the school context. Also, in other interviews, the teachers underlined the need for the students to recognize how much personal information they can share with the teachers. The students were also expected to know how to maintain an open and positive attitude towards the teachers. The teachers have the control over the limits of how much personal information students should share. In our analysis we point out how the students were required to share their personal information, but at the same time maintain proper distance. Balance between these two requirements was only possible if one recognizes the correct social rules and hence has the correct social skills. The teachers were allowed to maintain a distance and keep their personal information private. As part of maintaining proper distance, students must be able to recognize the limit between private and public. Not all forms of behavior and social skills are accepted in the school context. Davies (2011) points out that students must know what kind of behavior is recognized as social skills, and conditions of recognition define what can be recognized as social skills.

In the teacher interviews, a lack of 'correct' social skills was constructed in complex and even contradictory ways. There were forms of behavior, such as aggression, shyness and passiveness that were seen in the manuals as behavior that was to be prevented through enforcing the correct social skills. Students then have to be able to recognize the limits and the rules of the behavior that is considered socially skillful and, in this way, 'normal'. The students must learn to perceive and understand rules, and act by them. The capacity to act by the rules is connected to the neoliberal mode of capitalism, where the ideal student changes to become more flexible and autonomous, which can be seen in how the requirement to be 'normal' operates at school. (See also Beach & Dovemark, 2007). Only some forms of social skill can be recognizable. The division of public and private space and the demand for students to recognize it is historical and contextual and it is connected to how laborers' bodies and their being in different spaces was controlled at the beginning of industrial capitalism. To recognize the behavior demanded in public and in private was then essential (Mcruer, 2006). The important question is how the students recognize the limits and rules of behavior so they can be recognized as having social skills. If the behavior is not recognizable in the context of social skills, students can become 'unrecognizable' and at risk of exclusion. Behavior can be pathologized in a similar way to the body.

Based on the interviews and manuals for social skills, we suggest that there is a notion of social skills as being individualized, and as something to be fixed, if they are constructed as 'incorrect'. The responsibility to change or resolve the situation then falls more to the individual than to the institution. The individual is then expected to fix their behavior to be considered a 'normal' subject. They also must adapt to the formal school and society. We seek to contest this ideology of individualized social skills by contesting the notion of capitalist commonsense (Watkins, 1999), which in school is connected to the expectation of adaptability and competitiveness. When the gaze is on the individual, there is no critique of the structures or the notion of how the student or the school should be (Fahlgren, Johansson & Mulinari, 2011). Hence, we underline that individualization is a way to present hierarchical relations as 'normal'. Rinne (2012) states that the pupils who are open to norms, rules and moral codes and can cope with them are defined as 'normal'. Based in the interviews and manuals, we state that students learn their position regarding normality at school, which is socially constructed to include traits such as autonomy, adaptability, and competitiveness. Under this construction, it seems that individual capacities and traits define students' positions in hierarchies, making it appear to be neutral. In place of apparently neutral structures we suggest that what is constructed as 'normal' is loaded with values and norms.

Being autonomous, capable of adapting and to recognize the limits of 'correct' behavior are among the social skills that can be quantified and measured or tested, and they are connected to the labor market as they describe desired aspects of

workers' performance (Urciuoli, 2008). Urciuoli (2008) also describes how acquiring this set of skills is likely to bring better monetary outcomes in the labor market. Social skill is shifting and includes a range of things such as knowledge of ways of acting. Thus, the social skills which the teachers connected to 'normal' behavior were connected to wider expectations of 'correct' behavior in society. One of the functions of teaching the right set of social skills and constructing normality is then to produce integration in society, to reproduce the structures of the division of labor and to classify students so they can be directed into different layers of society (Rinne, 2012). By naming some individuals as having a set of social skills which are presented as incorrect and outside the norm, through its schools, society controls which behavior differs too much from the 'normal' (Silvennoinen & Pihlaja, 2012). The 'normal' and the norms, are a relational issue, not something that resides in the individual. To be categorized as a 'normal' student you must be open to the norms and the moral codes, and as part of that, having the right set of social skills (Rinne, 2012). The core of these skills might then be the capacity to modify the content and form of skills depending on the surroundings where the skills are required.

We then state that the request to be able to adapt would mean to be able to be part of the formal and informal school, without challenging it. The students were expected to be able to recognize the limits of the 'correct' social skills and behavior. The 'correct' behavior is an indispensable part of normality. Hence, these expectations were connected to the normality as an ideal of how a student should be, and how one should be able to adapt to that society and to the school. In the school, the student now is asked to adapt to the system, but we could ask how the system can adapt to the needs of the students.

4.3 Normality and bullying

The third article examines the teachers' reactions to bullying, and the school-wide processes of bullying and exclusion through a case-study of one student. In this article, written with Gunilla Holm and Marianne Dovemark, we used ethnographic fieldnotes from the Springfield school. We seek to answer the question of how teachers either knowingly or unknowingly handle bullying, and what factors enable bullying. We used the concepts of recognition, and recognizability by Davies (2011) to explain how bullying was explained and even enabled. With this, we mean how the teachers enable bullying, such as by not doing anything when the student is bullied. The researched school, Springfield, was part of 'KiVa-koulu' which is a widely-used anti-bullying program in Finland. KiVa-koulu concentrates mainly on preventing bullying by changing individuals' behavior. Regardless of being part of an anti-bullying program, teachers participated in bullying. In this article, we followed the case of Sasu, who was heavily bullied and excluded. The bullying took many forms ranging from physical threats to cyber

bullying. Through his case it was possible to examine school-wide processes of bullying and exclusion. It was commonly known among the teachers and students that Sasu was being bullied.

As part of this study we defined studies that challenge individually and psychologically-oriented study on bullying as being critical bullying studies. Our study is located in the field of critical bullying studies. The most generally-used conceptualization of bullying, is a notion that bullying is defined as aggression that is targeted to those who are more vulnerable than those who are doing the bullying, aggression which must be repeated, according to Olweus (1993), Salmivalli (2010) and Thornberg (2015b). Even though earlier research on bullying was constructed as an issue that concerns mainly individuals and their pathological behavior, in the field of critical bullying studies, bullying is not seen only as a pathology of individual behavior. Bullying is also seen considering norms, cultural and social aspects, and the role of adults (Davies, 2011; Walton, 2011; Bansel et al., 2009; Walton, 2005). One of the main points of critical bullying studies is that the so-called ‘experts’ concentrate mainly on individuals and a label them as being ‘dysfunctional’ or ‘not-normal’ and by doing so, they also target individuals for treatment often at the same time they are segregated from their school mates (Bansel et al., 2009). This view of bullying as an issue that concerns individuals might be problematic, as the bullying is presented as problematic behavior of the individual. Structures and the influence of adults, school culture and values are not taken in to account (Duncan, 2013). By following the case of Sasu, we underlined how the bullying cannot be restricted to the behavior of an individual student, but it is a school-wide process.

Sasu was a student in a regular class and he was categorized as ‘not-normal’ by the students. Tanja, one of the students who bullied Sasu, explains that Sasu was bullied because of his deviance. The students pointed out that Sasu was named as ‘not-normal’ due to his behavior. In the fieldnotes, one of the students underlined that– Sasu – should be the target of the research.

Tanja says that Sasu is the one who should be the object of research in this school. I answer that we are not interested in individuals but in the structures and reasons for why someone is excluded. Tanja and Saana answer that Sasu is bullied because he is different and he behaves differently. (Fieldnotes, ‘Springfield’)

Tanja and Saana underline that Sasu’s different behavior (together with him being different) is the reason for him being bullied. This behavior that was presented as being different or ‘not-normal’ included movements and making noises (such as singing during class). By naming Sasu and his behavior as ‘not-normal’ Tanja and Saana were defining what is ‘normal’ (Warner, 1999; Rinne, 2012).

Thus, by defining Sasu's behavior as 'not-normal', he was placed outside of normality and norms. The 'not-normal' behavior was used then to exclude Sasu, and the teachers participated in the exclusion. While the other students were pointing out Sasu's deviant behavior. Teachers acting as if they did not notice the bullying was in line with earlier research, in which a connection was made between presenting students as deviant, and bullying. Regarding this research, teachers may not intervene in bullying if they blame the victim (Mishna, 2004; Varjas et. al., 2008). The excerpt below illustrates how the teacher avoids intervening when bullying is going on.

Throughout the class, small paper pellets are being thrown at Sasu. Some of them stick in his hair. Meri and Natalia who sit behind him say nothing, even though some of the paper pellets hit them too and they can clearly see that there are pellets in Sasu's hair. It is mainly Kadar, Heikki and Basil who are throwing the paper pellets; at some point, they threw them at each other too, but mainly at Sasu. The teacher sees that they are doing something. (They are doing it so openly that it is impossible to ignore it, and Sasu's hair is full of paper pellets.) (Fieldnotes, 'Springfield')

In the excerpt above, there is a scene in which a student is bullied in a very visible way. The teacher does not intervene in the bullying during the class. After class, some other students go to the teacher, complaining about the bullying targeting Sasu. Thus, the teacher remains inactive until the students' intervention. In some cases, the teachers did not just remain inactive, but became angry or annoyed with Sasu, although he had not done anything but be bullied. The student was haunted by exclusion, as his actions in and out of the classroom were interpreted through the lens of deviance. We analyzed Sasu's situation using the notion of secondary deviance which in this case would mean that in his case deviant action was not interpreted as momentary, but instead he was identified as a deviant student (Bansel et. al., 2009).

Even though the teachers and the school as an institution were interested in preventing bullying, it was also school policy to prevent bullying by applying an anti-bullying program. However, Sasu still was not recognized as a victim of bullying and there were limited interventions to the bullying in his case. The teachers did not help him when the other students excluded him and prevented him from doing his school work.

When it is time to fetch the microscopes, all the other students find a partner or a group for themselves, only Sasu is left alone. He glances around and moves around, he seems anxious and embarrassed, and when the teacher speaks, he seems not to be listening, as he continues moving around and does not look at the teacher. Sasu is the last one to grab a

microscope. He doesn't take the other utensils that the teacher had instructed them to take, so he can't use the microscope. Teacher: "You didn't listen when I explained. I showed you what you need." (Fieldnotes, Springfield)

In the excerpt above, due to being excluded by the other students, Sasu cannot find a group for the group work assignment. The other students openly exclude him and also laugh at and whisper about him. The teacher not only ignores his exclusion and the bullying, but also gets mad at Sasu because Sasu does not do as instructed or did not listen to the teacher's instructions. Even when it is clear that Sasu was not able to fetch the required utensils in time, because other students were taking the utensils, the teacher did nothing. When the teacher was giving instructions Sasu was looking for a group to work with and was being rejected by all the groups. The excerpt above was not an exceptional case, since in the classes with this teacher and in other classes too, the students many times openly showed that they did not want to work with Sasu nor was he welcomed to be part of student groups during recesses. As the teacher did not intervene, Sasu was unable to participate in the teaching. In another case, the same teacher was observing a situation when another student blocked Sasu's way to the utensils, but still he did not intervene. When the teacher sees that Sasu is being bullied and decides not to intervene and becomes angry with Sasu, his decision can be interpreted as an active choice. Moreover, he also becomes angry with Sasu and thereby again participates in his exclusion. By not helping Sasu to find a group and by rebuking him, the teacher participated in the bullying instead of preventing it. By not intervening in the bullying, the teachers played an important role in bullying and actively participated in it (Horton, 2011). As in our study, other research has shown how teachers can moderate their reaction by stopping or not stopping bullying, depending on if they blame the student or not (Misha, 2004; Varjas et al., 2008) or if the bullied student is unpopular (Yoneyama & Naito, 2003). Also, as Sasu was not able to integrate autonomously into the groups, he was constructed as being outside the ideal student who is considered to be able to adapt and to be autonomous (Juva & Vaahtera, 2017).

Teachers justified the bullying by constructing Sasu as a 'not-normal' subject. Earlier studies show that deviant students are corrected or cast out (Duncan, 2013). Something similar happened in the case of Sasu, as the teachers held negative attitudes towards him. He was excluded, and the teachers did not take care of him. In the excerpt below the teacher gets angry with Sasu when he does not want to participate in the discussion about sex and contraceptives during a health class.

Sasu continues to explain his point of view to the teacher: 'What if my parents don't want me to learn these things and what we talked about in class before?'

The teacher answers Sasu in a harsh voice: 'In that case your parents must contact the principal, who will direct them to be in contact with the National Board of Education and even all the way to Ministry of Education.' (Fieldnotes, Springfield)

Sasu: 'When in one class we watched a film about lesbians, one girl asked for permission to leave the classroom.'

Teacher: 'We talk about gays and other issues here, but I won't show any lesbians here.' (Fieldnotes, Springfield)

Sasu expresses that he does not feel comfortable with the theme of the class, and the teacher gets annoyed with Sasu. He confronts Sasu in front of the whole class for not wanting to talk about the themes of reproduction and homosexuality. Instead of asking Sasu after the class why he does not want to address these topics, the teacher humiliates Sasu in front of other students. When I had a talk with Sasu outside the classroom it became clear that Sasu does not have homophobic attitudes. Sasu stated that it does not matter if he is gay or not, but that he was bullied for being gay. Other students shouted homophobic slurs on various occasions, but the teachers did not intervene in the homophobic slurs as firmly, as the teacher did when Sasu did not want to discuss homosexuality. Instead of trying to create a classroom culture in which Sasu could have participated and thus preventing him from being bullied, the teachers showed negative attitudes towards him by scolding him when he was bullied. Teachers constructed Sasu as 'not-normal' by blaming him for being bigoted and not liberal enough. The ideal 'normal' student would be liberal according to the school's values. Sasu was also constructed as 'not-normal' by his own behavior, but also because the values of his family moved him away from the ideal normality of the school.

In the excerpt below, the teachers describe how Sasu has been transferred between classes and has finally left the school.

Teacher 1: We had a good start, then there was a crisis and (laughs), and now it is, but then he left in the fall (the school), if you remember this person, who, I think, went through all the groups in ninth grade.

Teacher2: Yeah, he couldn't find his place in this school. (Group interview, Springfield)

In the excerpt above, the teacher presents Sasu's exit from the school as a chain of active decisions, because from their perspective, Sasu went from class to class, instead of being moved from class to class. Also, he was described as leaving the school and not as having been forced to leave the school or transferred to another school. In this way, it was constructed that Sasu was actively making decisions about these actions, and not that Sasu had to move because of the bullying. Finally,

the teachers say that Sasu himself was not able to find his place in the school. However, it was common knowledge in the school that Sasu was being bullied. Other students said that Sasu was bullied because he was not 'normal'. Some of the students also mentioned that Sasu was left alone to deal with the bullying. This is in line with earlier research that showed that a teacher would not intervene easily if they somehow thought that student was causing the bullying by their behavior (Misha, 2004; Varjas et al., 2008).

As the teachers said that Sasu left the school of his own will, they do not recognize that he had been bullied. The whole process of bullying seemed to be invisible. One reason for not 'seeing' the bullying was that Sasu was not recognized as bully victim (Davis, 2011; Butler, 1990). The theory of recognition is originally Butler's (1990), and Davies (2011) applied it in a school context and specifically to examine bullying. Originally, with this theory, Butler referred to the processes through which individuals are recognized either as male or female, by the existing standards. Likewise, in school some students are recognized as 'normal' students or as bullies. Recognition depends on recognizability as only certain acts can be recognized as bullying. Bullies are constructed as recognizable by the teachers by placing them outside the normative order (Davies, 2011). Existing categories such as bully or victim of bullying already influence what can be recognized. In case of bullying, if one does not fit in, these categories (or other categories such as bystander) one can become unintelligible. When teachers ignored and even participated in excluding Sasu, they were maintaining the fixed normative order. To maintain it, they ignored and excluded Sasu, and this was legitimized by labeling Sasu as 'not-normal'. As Sasu was labelled 'not-normal', he was recognized neither as a student nor as a victim of bullying. As part of recognizability, the limits of the 'normal' and 'not-normal' are constructed and reconstructed continuously, though this process can be slow. This lack of recognition (and exclusion of those who are not recognized), is connected to how society constructs not-normality and how the behavior that differs too much is controlled, such as by moving students from general education to special education, or in the case of Sasu, by transferring him to another school (Silvennoinen & Pihlaja, 2012).

The teachers did not show concern for Sasu and for the fact that he had been severely bullied, because Sasu had become unrecognizable as a victim. He had to leave the school because he was considered by the teachers to be incapable of adapting to the school. The teachers did not question the severity of the process through which a student is forced to leave the school because of bullying. From our point of view, this lack of attention and concern from the teachers shows how labelling a student as 'not-normal' or deviant naturalizes the exclusion of the student. Generally, those who cannot fit into the normative order are at risk of being excluded (Bansel, Davies, Laws & Linnell, 2009). When a student is considered to be outside categories (such as 'student' or 'victim of bullying') they are pathologized as 'not-normal', and to correct their behavior for re-establishing normality,

there is an intention to change their behavior or if this does not work, to have them moved to an institution that deals with deviancy (Duncan, 2013). The student, in this case Sasu, was defined as a potential problem due to his behavior. By identifying the potential problems, the school and teachers intended to resolve or remove those problems. The students identified as problematic are at risk of being marginalized or encouraged to become 'normal' citizens (Baker, 2002). By removing Sasu from the school, the normative order was maintained intact.

As we focused on one case, we could describe networks of processes, such as the processes for transferring Sasu, and different actors that were intertwined in this case with bullying. In the earlier studies, the focus had been on individual students who do the bullying and are bullied. In our study we sought to open up this view by pointing out that there are other actors, in this case, teachers, participating in the bullying. The role of the teachers was important, as they can normalize and legitimize bullying, especially in cases in which the bullied student was categorized as being deviant. The teachers participate in constructing students as deviant by constructing bullying as a question of an individual's pathological behavior. Teachers do not operate in a vacuum, but their actions are influenced by structures (norms, rules, and culture), which may enable bullying (Duncan, 2013; Horton, 2011). Through the teachers' actions, and acts such as transfer to another school, we could point out that bullying is not only an issue of behavior of an individual student but is a more complex phenomenon. As the normative order, in general it can be seen as forming the basis for the behavior that can be categorized as bullying (Meyer, 2007; Davies, 2011). It is important that bullying is not only seen as an exception, because it is too common to be represented only as 'not-normal' or having deviant behavior (Bansel et al., 2009; Horton, 2011). Thus, it is not possible to present bullying only as a problem of an individual deviant child. It is an issue of norms, values, culture and structures, as a student that defies or fails to fit into the existing normative orders can become unrecognizable as a student, and in this way they can be constructed as being less worthy of care and help.

Teachers can be very motivated to tackle bullying at school, but their space for action is defined by normative orders that define bullying as an issue of individual dysfunction. Similar views on bullying are present in anti-bullying programs such as the one which was used at Sasu's school. Hence, we proposed in our article that bullying should be conceptualized in a wider context and not isolated to an individual behavioral issue. One way to conceptualize bullying is to understand it as one of the (mis)functions of school, as a punishment process of those who are considered to be deviant (Thornberg, 2015a). It can be asked if bullying is somehow part of a school's functions, and not an exception in the form of a malfunction. With this, we want to point out that bullying is deeply anchored in the networks of actors, norms, values and culture of the school. Discussion should also

focus on whether bullying is adequate as a concept to describe the complex processes of normalization and exclusion that are essential for maintaining the normative orders of the school.

5 Concluding discussion

In the course of the research process, I became aware of how the notion of normality is ambiguous. Both students and school personnel connected many features to normality. Many of these features were related to one's behavior. Normality was presented as being average, but at the same time, 'correct' social skills and Finnishness were connected to normality. In many cases, the limits of normality were articulated by naming what is 'not-normal'. Margins and exclusion make normality visible (Isopahkala-Bouret & Brunila, 2014) and for this reason when trying to write about normality, I ended up writing about not-normality too.

Constructing normality was an ongoing process including naming 'the normal' and at the same time excluding the 'not-normal'. Nevertheless there were some areas of normality that were more long-lasting, and the construction of those traits were connected to the historical processes of construction of normality. In the processes of constructing normality school staff reproduced the notions of normality in the society, but they also added their own understanding and interpretation and in that way participated in the construction and reconstruction of normality.

5.1 Reflection on methodology and theory

An ethnographic approach, including participant observation, and individual as well as group interviews, functioned to deconstruct the concepts of normality and not-normality. The combination of these methods made me question the notion of the concept of normality. The concept of normality turned out to be naturalized or taken for granted in the two schools in the study. By combining participant observations, individual and group interviews I was able to concentrate on three themes that proved to be connected to normality. Based on earlier theory, I was aware of the connection between whiteness and normality, but social skills and bullying also emerged in the participant observations and interviews as important aspects (Baker, 2002, Echeverría 2007). Other artifacts, such as the manuals and textbooks for social skills helped me to contextualize the data. When the teachers talked about social skills, they turned out to be similar to the concepts of social skills in the manuals and textbooks. Through participatory observations I observed a wide variety of social skills, such as helping fellow students, creating safe spaces for those who were at risk of being bullied, creating networks of friendships that were not reflected in the interviews with the teachers or in the manuals. In this way, I started to question the notion of social skills that were connected to the capacity to adapt and to be obedient as it was portrayed by teachers and in the manuals (see also Kauppila, 2005).

Having data produced by different methods helped me approach the question about how school personnel and students perceived and constructed normality and ‘normal’ students from different angles in the studied schools. The connection between bullying and normality was constructed in the methodological dialogue between interviews and participatory observations. Participatory observation was a valuable tool in this research since through the participatory observations, some contradictions emerged. Teachers and students stated in the interviews that they were against bullying and in many cases, they claimed that no student was bullied at the school. Meanwhile, I observed various cases of bullying and exclusion in which some of the students and the teachers participated. The participatory observations were backed up or contextualized with the interviews.

Instead of presenting one all-encompassing theory, I used the concept of normality as a lens to the three perspectives of Finnishness, social skills and bullying. The concept of normality connected all the three articles, and in turn it was enriched by the three perspectives. Under each perspective, I used theories drawn from different fields. This combination enabled me to examine manifold ways to construct normality and the different ways it was used in the two schools in the study. However, I do underline that this research represents just one interpretation of the data and cannot capture the richness of ‘reality’ (Bakunin, 2011; Feyereabend, 1999). As we operate from different positions (such as researcher or middle class), there is no way that we can somehow acquire purely objective knowledge from the field (Hakala & Hynninen, 2007). We can try to be honest in our process of reflections about our lenses to study the field or our different positions, but even then, our constructions or interpretations of the richness of happenings and processes in the field, are limited. What we can do is to be transparent about our methodological and theoretical choices. However, it is also important that one is capable of seeing the limits of one’s research. In addition, it is essential for us to be aware of how research done by others enriches and take the themes and interpretations of one’s own research a step further.

5.2 Constructions of normality in the two studied schools

Normality in the two schools was constructed both as having ‘correct’ social skills and by belonging in the sphere of Finnishness. One part of ‘correct’ social skills was to be able to be autonomous and to adapt to the schools’ rules and to the society. Both traits can be connected to expectations of the society. In the context of neoliberal society autonomy is a characteristic of an ideal student and worker (Martin, 1994; Beach & Dovemark, 2007). The main point of being able to adapt was not to differ too much. Connected to the capacity to adapt was to be able to recognize the limits of behavior. When you know those limits you are able to realize how much you can differ and in which way. The essential thing is to be able to adapt to the school’s environment, and as the manuals for developing social

skills state, to the working life (Keltikangas-Järvinen, 2010; Kauppila, 2005; Kalliopuska, 1995; Poikkeus, 1995).

In the context of social skills and bullying, Rinne (2012) describes how the students become 'school wise', by learning to manage and act by the rules and social norms of the school. Those students who can learn to be 'school wise', by knowing when to make noise and when not, also learn how they are positioned in relation to normality and can then participate in guarding the limits of normality, by describing the behavior of other students as 'not-normal'. Thus one important part of social skills in the schools was the ability to recognize the limits of 'normal' behavior. According to the interviews the students were expected to know how to act and behave as 'normal' in order not to be bullied. Hence, exclusion from normality happened by defining 'correct' behavior in the two studied schools by students and the school staff.

To be Finnish was constructed in the interviews as part of being 'normal'. The Finnishness itself was defined by categorizing those who did not belong to Finnishness and by the problematizing of not Finnishness. Positive traits such as being successful were connected to Finnishness and as a counterpart, negative traits were connected to migrant and migrant background students. Being positioned outside Finnishness was seen as a risk for marginalization. Even though traits such as knowing the Finnish language was demanded as part of Finnishness, and by that, as part of normality, it might still not be enough. As pointed out also in the earlier research there is no objective criterion that defines who can be Finnish (Lepola, 2000) and the limits of Finnishness and normality change as the society changes.

To present normality as something neutral was one of the important themes in this study. The supposed neutrality was constructed in the interviews through constructing schools as a Finnish space and by presenting certain behaviors as neutral or natural. As normality was connected to Finnishness and whiteness, the space described as equal, became a space of Finnishness as only in this space was Finnishness seen as neutral and 'normal' and other identities as unwanted exceptions. Constructing Finnishness as neutral or ordinary is part of a wider process of the naturalization of nations, through which nations are presented as 'natural' entities and not as something historically constructed (Billig, 1995). In the interviews with the teachers the Finnish identity and culture were so naturalized that they were not considered to be an identity or a culture at all, and did thus not form a threat to the supposedly neutral identity of a school. The schools as a Finnish space were easier for those who were constructed as part of Finnishness as their identity was counted as 'normal' in the school. Generally, in the two schools in the study, Finnishness was seen as so obvious that there was no need to emphasize it. The Finnishness was perceived as 'banal' or obvious in the two schools (see also Tolonen, 2002).

Hence, according to the interviews Finnishness as the common ethnicity was unchallenged or was seen only as a 'good' choice. In this context, students from other ethnic backgrounds were mainly seen as problematic.

By addressing the concept of normality, this study challenges the common sense notion of normality as an average student in the school context. When normality is described as an average of how a student is, it includes structures and processes of power (Rinne, 2012). Hence when certain social skills, as to be autonomous and capable of adapting to the expectations of the schools, were presented in the interviews as part of being 'normal', specific modes of behaving and relating to other human beings, were naturalized and presented as neutral - as something that an average person would do. At the same time, other modes of behavior, such as sharing too much personal information or dancing and singing during the classes, were categorized as 'not-normal'.

The idea of normality as including the ideal of how a student should be was presented throughout this study. In this study I proposed that among other things, normality is the sum of 'correct' social skills, and those social skills are part of the constructions of the ideal subject in society. The ideal subject is a notion of how an ideal human being should be able to function in society in the most efficient way (Echeverría, 2007). According to the interviews normality included the notion of the average, but it also included the notion of the ideal. Davis (1995) describes how Francis Galton changed the concept of normality from mere 'average man' to include the idea of ideal traits, such as high intelligence. Hacking (1990) says that 'normal' contains both the 'is' (the traits that an average human being has) and the 'ought to' (the ideal traits that an ideal human being should have). The normality then includes the notion of what traits are valued, such as, the capability to adapt.

5.3 Outside of the normality

As mentioned above, part of studying normality is to study what is 'not-normal'. Researching normality is necessarily research about deviance, as deviance or marginality are needed to maintain normality (Isopahkala-Bouret & Brunila, 2014). By naming some movement or voice or social skills as 'not-normal', normality becomes visible (Rinne, 2012). Normality does not only include naming the 'not-normal', it also includes the processes of exclusion connected to naming the 'not-normal'. By excluding those who are named as 'not-normal', the limits of normality are guarded.

The students classified as 'not-normal' are likely to do less well in school, as their classification as 'not-normal' functions as a 'self-fulfilling prediction' (Rinne, 2012, p. 49). The school system in Finland has worked as a mean to separate those who can't learn and work, from those who can (Jauhiainen, 2012). The school continues this work by defining who have the 'right' set of social skills,

and by trying to fix or exclude those students who don not have the 'right' set of social skills. Students must be able to recognize the rules of behavior. If they do not, they are at risk of being excluded and the exclusion is then explained by their lack of capacity to behave in the 'correct' way. The behavior or reactions recognized as 'normal' and 'not-normal' reflects the norms of the society. By reflecting on the norms of the society, categorizations of the students as 'normal' and 'not-normal' explains equally about society and individual students.

In both schools in this study, according to the interviews, there was a categorization of some students as migrant or as part of some ethnicity or nationality other than Finnish. Defining 'the other' is a way to construct Finnishness (Riitaoja, 2013; Lempiäinen, 2002; Gordon, Holland & Lahelma, 2000; Billig, 1995). The construction of the nation or Finnishness is connected to the notions of 'race' (Tuori, 2009; Rastas, 2007; Lepola, 2000). Racism and different processes of racialization⁵ are still present in Finnish schools. Racism comes in form of racialized structures as in case of Roma students, who are targeted according to negative racialized narratives in the school context (Helakorpi, 2019) or by describing the treatment of non-westerners in a dehumanizing way by referring to them as natural disasters that threaten 'western world' (Mikander, 2016). The racism in contemporary schools can be more difficult to perceive as it often takes the form of cultural racism in place of biological racism. Culture is used instead of the word 'race', and the hierarchies are based on cultural differences. However, the racialized notions of differences still linger 'behind' the hierarchies based on cultural differences (Grosfoguel, 2007). In the interviews with the teachers, the migrant and migrant background students were constructed as a homogenous group that was at risk to be marginalized. There was a demand for a student to leave their ethnic or national identity behind in order to become a full member of the schools. Becoming a full member was made partly impossible because students who were categorized as migrants or with migrant background were seen through essentialized categories. Migrant and migrant background students are targets of integration, but at the same time, they are excluded from Finnishness. Grosfoguel (2007) points out how by presenting migrants as an essentialist and culturally different category, their position in the lower ranks in the hierarchy is justified. The migrant

⁵ The concept of racialization is used in many ways, and it is in the center of continuous discussion of how it should be used (see e.g. Keskinen & Andreassen, 2017; Murji & Solomos, 2005). Helakorpi (2019), drawing e.g. from Mulinari et al (2009) and Lentin (2008) defines racialization in her research as a process through which race is given significations and it also becomes settled. She describes how "...processes of racialization construct and stabilize categories of Other, connecting certain differences to these categories. Typically, the attributes associated with the Other contain negative signifiers, and the Other is represented as inadequate or threatening" (Helakorpi, 2019, p.5). As part of the racialization the relation between "us" and the Other are essentialized and naturalized, this makes it possible to legitimize racialized power relations. Keskinen and Andreassen (2017) add that whiteness acts in the processes of racialization as a norm "...against which 'others' are measured and defined" (Keskinen & Andreassen, 2017, p. 66).

and migrant background students were not positioned in a direct way in a lower position in the schools because that would go against the principle of equality, nevertheless there was an expectation that they were at risk of being marginalized. The students that were categorized as members of nations or ethnic groups that differed from Finnishness were then categorized as potential problems or deviant from the community (Yuval-Davis, 1997). Thus, Finnishness was constructed in the interviews as the normality and migrant and migrant background students as not-normality.

In the case when the students are categorized as having social skills or behaving in ways described as 'not-normal' or when the students are migrants or have a migrant background, they might be placed in the position where they are not recognized fully as a 'normal' student. In place of being categorized as 'normal', they are categorized as 'not-normal' and thus a potential problem. By breaking the social norms or norms of correct behavior, one becomes unrecognizable (Davies, 2011). Those students who are categorized as 'not-normal' are at risk of being excluded (Bansel et al., 2009).

5.4 Exclusion, marginalization and individualization

One of the essential findings of this study was the connection of normality to the specific processes of exclusion and marginalization. According to the classroom- and school-observations, one of the mechanisms of maintaining normality by exclusion in the two schools was bullying. Bullying was legitimized by categorizing students as 'not-normal'. Bullying can be seen as a means of controlling students, as society chooses what is seen as 'not-normal'. Creating a 'not-normal' student by naming them as 'not-normal', is a means to control behavior that differs too much from the norm or normality (Silvennoinen & Pihlaja, 2012). Although I present one case – the case of Sasu – the mechanism of bullying and exclusion, naming him 'not-normal' and not intervening in the bullying, could happen to any student who in some way is categorized as 'not-normal'.

Bullies reflect the norms of the correct behavior of the society. Students appropriate the norms of adults and the society, and in doing so, they reconstruct those norms (Thornberg, 2015b). The definitions of normality define who or what is defined as 'not-normal', or outside of normality. This means that when someone is defined as 'normal' in school, others are defined as 'not-normal'. According to the classroom and school observations and interviews Sasu was constructed as 'not-normal', and thereby also marked the limits of 'normal' and 'not-normal' in the school. As the limits and contents of normality and not-normality are intertwined and in constant change they should be researched simultaneously, to capture the complexity of both concepts.

This study underlines how teachers did not prevent bullying and therefore how the bullying and the victim of bullying were invisible to them. According to the

classroom - and school-observations not only did those teachers remain passive, but they also participated in bullying by scolding the bullied student, or by having a hostile attitude towards him. The cultural, social and political process of constructing normality and deviance affects the whole school (and society). In cases of bullying, what is constructed as 'normal' behavior can affect who is recognized as a victim of bullying. Bullying is not only a question of individual behavior, but it is also a question of the norms, social and cultural aspects (Davies, 2011; Walton, 2011; Bansen et al. 2009; Walton, 2005). Then the bullying and the reactions of teachers and schools to bullying are influenced at least to some degree by the constructions of normality and not-normality, and the processes of recognition. When analyzing the data for this article, my conceptualization of bullying developed even further. I started to perceive bullying as a form of exclusion that includes individual aggression but also processes of exclusion in which the school community as a whole and the school as an institution participate. I then see bullying as a form of exclusion through which the norms of the school and normality as a societal ideal are forced onto the student through the actions of other students and teachers. To see bullying as one form of exclusion would enable bullying to be addressed as a structural issue with a wide range of participating actors. Such understanding about bullying is emphasized in the field of critical bullying studies which I define as a field that questions individual and psychological approaches on bullying. Defining the emerging field makes it easier to see how the bullying can be redefined and questioned from different angles.

According to the observation notes and the interviews with the teachers processes of exclusion and marginalization from normality were connected to the procedures of correction and expulsion of 'not-normal' groups in the context of school. The estimation of the risk of being excluded or marginalized is connected to the eugenic tradition. Eugenics includes a form of risk assessment, through which children and their behavior are assessed, to define if there are going to be any potential problems. As part of this assessment, some children and their behavior are categorized as problematic. The children who are potentially problematic are to be identified so that measures can be taken to avoid the problems connected to their behavior. Those children with migrant background or with an 'incorrect' set of social skills can become problematized and excluded and they can become targets for perfecting technologies through which the intention is to make everyone a part of normality (Baker, 2002; see also Campbell 2000). The notion of the statistical measurement of humans is connected to the idea that humans should be improved (Davies, 1995; Hacking, 1990). Part of improving the population was the notion of norming the population or the intention to form the 'standard' population. By naming the 'standard' population there had to be a 'non-standard' population as well. At the beginning of the eugenics movement, there was an idea to decrease the 'non-standard population' (Davis, 1995). Nowadays there is no

longer the intention in Finland to decrease numbers in the ‘non-standard’ population, but there is a tendency to define some sections of the population as ‘non-standard’, such as by describing them as a population at risk of marginalization.

The construction of the school as a neutral space makes it possible to maintain the status quo, when those deviating from normality can be categorized as problematic. In this case, normality is whiteness, Finnishness and having certain social skills. It is important to emphasize the constructed nature of normality and not-normality, since it is a constant process of categorization and maintaining categories, by naming someone with certain traits as ‘normal’, and thus defining what is ‘not-normal’ (Erevelles, 2011; Warner, 1999). The expectation of marginalization, makes it difficult to proceed in education and to be positioned in the labor market in an equally good way as those categorized as ‘normal’ (Rinne, 2012).

In the two schools studied, in the interviews with the teachers, there was an idea of the school as a neutral place, where all the conflicts were between individuals. In a similar manner according to the classroom- and school-observations, bullying was presented as individual students’ behavior problems. The notion of bullying was constructed by the teachers and students in the study as a question of normality or not-normality of the individual. One trait of the neoliberal system is individualization, where being excluded or being ‘normal’ is constructed as a choice of the individual (Fahlgren, Johansson & Mulinari, 2011). This can be seen in the case of Sasu, the bullied student: teachers said that it was his inability to behave in a ‘correct’ manner that caused him not to be able to find his place in school, and not the fact that he was bullied heavily. Blaming the individual was a way to disconnect the bullying from the school and adults, and their role in bullying (see also Duncan 2013). In addition, the anti-bullying program adopted in the school was constructing bullying as a question of individual behavior. The individualization of bullying, and its connection to constructing normality and not-normality, are one of the main findings from this study. This individualization can be seen in all the articles, but especially in the way social skills were required for normality. As the social skills are individualized and something to be fixed, if they are named as the not ‘correct’ set of social skills, then the individual is seen as being responsible for changing them to avoid marginalization, while the institution is not expected to change. The individualization was also visible in how racialization and racism were presented as individual problems or weaknesses (such as lacking in Finnish language skills) of the racialized students. In the interviews conflicts between Finnish and migrant and migrant background students were presented as conflicts between individuals and their feelings. In this manner, racialized hierarchies and structural racism remained hidden and schools did not need to address racism. All three articles address the individualization and the correcting of the individual student at some level. Correction can be done through teaching correct social skills, or demanding integration of traits of Finnishness and whiteness (even when it is not wholly possible) or in the case of the third article,

the procedures of handling bullying are targeted at an individual who is transferred from class to class and finally has to leave the school.

5.5 Reflections and implications

This thesis contributes to the scholarly discussion in the educational sciences by adding knowledge about the ways of constructing normality and its consequences within a school context. Though normality has been studied in the context of the Finnish school (Mietola, 2014; Riitaoja, 2013; Jauhiainen, 2012; Rinne, 2012; Silvennoinen & Pihlaja, 2012; Antikainen, Rinne & Koski, 2009; Mietola & Lappalainen, 2006), I broaden the discussion by concentrating on some specific processes of constructing normality in the school and the construction of the ideal as part of normality. By concentrating on specific phenomena, I also proposed some new perspectives to studying Finnishness and social skills from the perspective of educational sociology and to bullying from a critical perspective. The study indicates the normality does not only mean average or ordinary, but is an ideal for how the student or any human being should be, and how that notion of ideal is connected to racialized and economic structures. Based on my results, I also claim that in the context of the two studied schools the expectations of normality are used to justify and naturalize the exclusion and marginalization of students categorized as 'not-normal'. I state that the teachers actively construct normality in the studied schools. According to the interviews and the classroom- and school-observations the construction of normality, and as its counterpart not-normality, enable and legitimize the exclusion of students.

There is a need for critical thinking that defies the hegemony (Mikander, 2016) and for anti-racist education (Alemanji, 2016) to expose those structures that maintain racist structures in the school. There is a need for a closer look at the specific mechanisms that maintain the notion of neutrality of the school. If the school is understood as a neutral place without any ethnic identity, it will be difficult to carry out anti-racist programs or programs to tackle exclusion and marginalization. According to my research, there is still a gap between the official discourse of equality and the everyday practices and the attitudes and expectations of the teachers.

At a more general level, those who are constructed as not fully belonging to the nation are excluded from power resources (Yuval-Davis, 1997). The question of constructing Finnishness is then a question of who can access society's power resources. To challenge the whiteness (as part of Finnishness) at school, it would be necessary to deconstruct the myth of neutrality. Whiteness cannot be wholly challenged by those who benefit from the privilege of their whiteness (including me). By addressing the concept of equality in the context of school critically, the concept can be problematized and perhaps even reconstructed in the future.

One of the major contributions to the field of educational studies is the problematization of concepts such as social skills and bullying. By questioning the mainstream conceptualizations, I also question the policies and practices based on those concepts. A more contextualized conceptualization of social skills in the manuals and textbooks for teachers, and a wider understanding of them as political, economic and cultural issues is needed. As manuals for development of social skills used in teacher education are targeted at teaching personnel, they will influence what is taught as social skills. For this reason, it is important for teacher education students learn to understand the wider context of that some social skills are named as 'normal' and others not. This should include critical reading of the existing manuals and textbooks to understand what kind of behavior the manuals and textbooks present as 'normal' and what kind of behavior is presented as 'not-normal'. Moreover what can be recognized as social skills according to these manuals and textbooks? Social skills are presented as something neutral. In future research manuals and textbooks for social skills could be analyzed from the point of view of the actors and the economic, political and cultural systems they are based on, and in this way challenge the assumptions of neutrality. As mentioned above, only certain social skills are recognized in the manuals and were mentioned in the interviews. To become a 'normal' subject is to become a student with the 'correct' set of social skills, with which they will be able to adapt to society and to working life. The question then should be: Can we imagine a school where other social skills, such as mutual cooperation, would be appreciated and what kind of society would we have if we had a school that recognizes a wider set of social skills?

Bullying as part of 'guarding' the limits of normality is seen in the light of this study as a structural issue. The individualized approach to bullying hides some major dynamics and issues of bullying. Bullying should be studied at the macro – systemic level too. To refer to bullying as a form of exclusion makes it possible to understand how the norms of the school or even being 'normal' are forced on the student by other students and teachers, it then becomes a collective process of correction and exclusion, and not only an issue of the behavior of some individuals. It can be asked if it is meaningful to speak about bullying or should it be discussed as part of exclusion or fulfilling norms. In that way it would not be seen as an error but something that is closely connected to other functions of schools, such as directing students to different positions in society (Jauhiainen, 2012; Rinne, 2012; Silvennoinen & Pihlaja, 2012). By understanding bullying as a structural issue and as a form of exclusion and part of a school's functions, it can be used to develop new ways of solving bullying. I see that the construction of normality, and exclusion as part of it, is more of a structural issue and unlikely to be changed by individual teachers. Many of the issues, such as legitimizing bullying by naming a student as 'not-normal', are naturalized and it can be difficult to observe them. Though I was in the two schools as a researcher and with the intention

of trying to perceive the phenomenon and processes of bullying from several angles and with a critical perspective, it was only after a period of participant observation and discussion with the students and teachers that I began to perceive the processes of constructing normality and exclusion.

The analysis of the structures that produce normality has been limited in this research project. It could also be possible to analyze the structures through the analysis of policy documents and teaching materials. The next step then would be an analysis of existing anti-bullying programs and policies. My results indicate that there could be a variety of actions that would defy or add to the notion of bullying as a problem of the individual. With regard to the anti-bullying programs, there could be a change of paradigm in teacher education as well as in policies targeted at schools. This does not mean that research about the individual's role in bullying should be abandoned, it merely means that there is a need to research structural factors as well as the role of the individual.

Teachers might be perceived in a negative light in this study. However, there were teachers who tried to stop bullying or who were deeply committed to the wellbeing of the students. Some of the teachers helped the students with learning problems, or by teaching students who had difficulties getting to school in a nearby library outside their working hours. My intention was not to point to the teachers as the culprits, but more to show case practices, norms and other structural issues that affect how teachers construct normality and not-normality, and how they participate in maintaining the limits of normality. More focus is needed on the structures that enable or limit teachers' work, such as the curriculum, teaching material or decision-making in the school. A lack of resources and the workload set limitations on a teacher's agency. It would be important to study the unpaid work that teachers do in their free time to help students at risk of marginalization. One of the objectives of the research project was to include school change work with the students. We succeeded to make some changes with the students. However, teachers had limited time to work with students on the changes. In addition, the schools' culture was not open to the idea that students were able to contribute to making profound changes in the school. Accomplishing profound changes in order to make the schools more inclusive, would have required the researchers to be fulltime in the schools for a long time plus cooperation between different actors in schools to obtain a structural change. The school has a variety of methods to maintain normality, through classification, assessment, creating differences in competence between students and molding them to a specific model (Silvennoinen & Pihlaja, 2012; Baker, 2002; Warner, 1999). Hence tackling bullying or exclusion is not only about changing the behavior of individual teachers, but it has to be a critical transformation of the school as an institution that constructs and maintains normality through continuous assessment and demand for unified behavior.

The research on normality will not end in the near future as the limits of the normality are constantly changing through people naming the 'normal' and 'not-normal'. Normality is not a stable state, but it is constantly constructed by language, action and practices. Nevertheless, there are traits, such as whiteness and middle classness, which change more slowly. Based on this study it was more difficult to be categorized as being 'normal' if one was not Finnish or had the 'correct' set of social skills. Then to be categorized as 'not-normal' meant that the student became a target for correcting procedures or was excluded from the school community. The exclusion could be immediate, as in the case of bullying, or in the long run, as when the migrant and migrant background students were categorized as problematic. Normality then included the ideal of how the students should be to be able to function in the school. Without doubt, one of the main findings was that to have 'correct' social skills or to be Finnish were presented as 'normal' and thus as ordinary, and in this way, the notion of the ideal of how a student should be was hidden behind the ordinariness. The supposed neutrality of the hierarchies based in the division of 'normal' and 'not-normal' makes it a demanding task to address them properly. The question then should not be who can be 'normal', but rather if it is possible to unravel the normality and thus unravel one form of the most profound hierarchies in the society.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1– permission slips for guardians

Dear parents!

Date

I am Ina Juva from the University of Helsinki. I am doing research about inclusion and exclusion at your child's school. We are a research team of four people from the Faculty of Behavioral Sciences at the University of Helsinki. Our study concerns inclusion and exclusion at school. We are interested in how the students and the school staff understand inclusion and exclusion at school. The experience of many students might be that they are outsiders of the school community, even though they are not necessarily considered to be outsiders. The project is part of an Academy of Finland funded research program called Children's and Youths' wellbeing and health (SKIDI-KIDS). The results of the study will be published in international scholarly journals.

The study includes two parts. The first part will be undertaken during the 2013-2014 school year. The more detailed plan is:

- In fall 2013, the students will take photographs and keep a diary of their observations and thoughts about inclusion and exclusion.
- In January 2014, the students will be interviewed based on their photography.
- In February 2014, the students and the researcher will discuss inclusion and exclusion based to their photography, diaries and interviews. In March-April, students will prepare a presentation about exclusion and inclusion for the teachers and parents.

If the school is willing, the research will continue during the 2014-2015 school year as collaboration projects between students, school staff, parents and researchers. The aim of this phase is to work together to minimize exclusive processes and to change the school to make it more inclusive. The more detailed plan of section two is:

- In fall 2014, the students will work in small groups and study the changes that are happening at school. They will also keep a diary about how the change process is proceeding, from their perspective.
- In February-April 2014, the researchers will meet the students for the last time. At this meeting, the discussion will focus on whether outsiderhood has decreased at the school, and if so, how.

We are now looking for eighth graders who could participate in small groups.

Your child has expressed an interest in participating in the study. Thus, we have contacted you to ask for your permission for your child to participate in this important study. We ask you to state your agreement or refusal on the form on the next page (return this to school). Participation is voluntary, and it will be possible leave the study at any time by informing the researchers.

The research material will be handled anonymously or with pseudonyms. Students' real names and other traits that could reveal their identity will be erased from all logs, diaries and interviews. Electronic research data will be kept secure with passwords and paper documents will be secured in locked-up space.

You can receive more information from the leader of the research project from. If necessary, we will also seek to answer questions in other languages.

Best regards

Parents/care givers consent: for student to participate to the research

First and last name of the student

Class

My child can participate in the research on exclusion.

My child is not allowed to participate on research on exclusion and inclusion.

Place, date

Signature of the parents/care givers and name in block letters

(One copy of this contract should remain with the guardian and one with the researchers)

APPENDIX 2—permission slip for teachers

Hi!

We are a research team of four people from the Faculty of Behavioral Sciences at the University of Helsinki. Our study concerns inclusion and exclusion at school. We are interested in how the students and the school staff understand inclusion and exclusion at school. The experience of many students might be that they are outsiders of the school community, even though they are not necessarily considered to be outsiders. The project is part of an Academy of Finland funded research program called Children's and Youths' wellbeing and health (SKIDI-KIDS). The results of the study will be published in international scholarly journals.

The object of the study is to find the means to reduce exclusion, and to localize structures and practices that support inclusion. Our starting point is in students' ideas/notions about exclusion at school, but at the same time, we are interested in what members of the school staff have to say about this phenomenon. First, we will interview school staff for their ideas/notions about exclusion and inclusion. After that, we will work with the students, who will examine these issues in their school. Our aim is for the students to be included and have a sense of belonging in the school community.

Research data will consist of participatory observations, individual and group interviews, photography and interviews based on photographs, electronic logs and paper diaries and a thematic day focusing on and mapping exclusion and inclusion. The material that the students produce and collect will be at the center of this study. The idea is that a group of students who have experienced exclusion or are interested in researching the theme will meet several times during the project. This group of students would discuss inclusion and exclusion. Our aim is to gather about 20-25 students (eighth graders in fall 2013) from each school being researched, and these students will be divided into smaller groups.

The research/study comprises two consecutive parts. The first part will take place during the 2013-2014 school year, and the main part of data will be collected during this period. A more detailed plan is as follows:

At the end of spring 2013 we will interview school staff, particularly teachers, school psychologists, social workers and teaching assistants, about the questions of exclusion and inclusion.

In the fall, we will begin participatory observation with eighth grade students. The students will take photographs and write logs/diaries through which they will describe things and situations that produce exclusion or inclusion.

The participatory observation will continue in spring 2014. We will start interviews with the students based on the photographs and logs. Students will make a presentation to teachers and parents about exclusion and inclusion.

If the school is interested, the research will continue during the 2014-2015 school year as action research through which the intention is to find ways to change structures that produce exclusion and to strengthen structures and practices that support inclusion, with school staff, students and parents. The school can decide at the end of the first part if it will participate in the second part.

The information collected from the research, including personal data, will be handled confidentially. Pseudonyms will be used and information that could potentially be identifiable will be erased or changed. Data which the research participants do not want to conserve will be destroyed after the analysis of the data, and results based on the analysis will be published. Other data will be stored in the Finnish Social Science Data Archive.

Participation in this research is voluntary. It is possible to resign from the study at any time during the research project by informing the researchers.

You can get more information from the

Consent of the school staff member to the research

☐ I am willing to be interviewed/give my permission to be interviewed for the study on inclusion and exclusion.

The transcript and anonymized interview text can be stored in the Finnish Social Science Data Archive (<https://www.fsd.uta.fi/en/>) for possible scholarly use in the future.

I request that transcript and anonymized interview text based on my own interview be destroyed after the analysis of the data and results based to the analysis have been published.

☐ I do not want to be interviewed for the research on inclusion and exclusion.

- ☐ I give my permission to the researcher to observe my classes or other work related situations.

The transcript and anonymized observation notes can be stored in the Finnish Social Science Data Archive (<https://www.fsd.uta.fi/en/>) for possible scholarly use in the future.

I request that the transcript and anonymized observation notes will be destroyed after the analysis of the data and results based to the analysis are published.

- ☐ I do not want the researcher to observe my classes or other work related situations.
- ☐ If the school participates in the second part of the research project, I am tentatively interested in collaboration related to this part of the process. The aim of this collaboration is to increase inclusion of students in the school community, with school staff, students and parents.

Place, date

Signature and name in block letters

Role at the school

(One copy of this agreement will remain with school staff member and one for the researchers)

APPENDIX 3—permission slip for students

Dear eighth grader,

I am Ina Juva from the University of Helsinki and I am undertaking research at your school about what students and school staff think about exclusion/outsiderness and inclusion at your school. Moreover, I am interested in your observations and experiences about issues and how you and other students together could change the situation.

The research project at your school will last approximately two years (August 2013 - May 2015). As part of the research, we will interview individual students and student groups, and we will organize group discussions with students. Moreover, the material that students produce and collect is very important for the research. The idea is that you and other students who are interested in looking into this topic could keep electronic logs or paper diaries and include photographs, drawings and writings about your own observations and reflections in them. The logs or diaries may focus on both general observations and your own experiences of exclusion and inclusion. All activities that are related to this research project can be done during the school day.

We will protect your anonymity in participation in this research project, and pseudonyms will be used. The things that you write or say will not be given to the school staff or your parents; they will be known only to the researchers.

You can get more information from... If necessary, you can use languages other than Finnish to provide your answers.

Best regards,

Consent to participate in the research:

☐ I want to participate in the research project that will be dealing with exclusion and inclusion.

First name and last name.

Class

Signature (confirms participation)

Names of the care givers (Of whom the consent is requested)

(One copy of this agreement will remain with the student and one with the researchers)

APPENDIX 4 - Interviews with teachers and staff

How would you describe the students that you consider to be marginalized or outsiders at school?

- In the student community
- In the school community
- Could you give examples?

How would you describe those students who do not belong to the group?

- In the student community
- In the school community
- Could you give examples?

Are there certain students or groups of students who are more likely to be outsiders?

- How do they become outsiders?
- Could you give examples?

What is a normal student like?

Does being different effect being an outsider or to develop sense of belonging?

- What does it mean to be different?
- How does the sense of belonging or outsidersness among the students looks like to the teachers?

Does the student's background affect his/her belonging/not belonging?

- How? What are the reasons?
- Can you give examples?

Are some student groups likely to be discriminated against more than others?

Which students or student groups?

- Can you give examples?

Ask these if they have not been mentioned:

- boys or girls (gender)
- disability
- highly intelligent/those who do well at school
- those who participate in special education
- What are the reasons for this?

Are the students bullied or left out for any of the following reasons?

- wealth, education, occupation, housing
- ethnicity
- skin color
- language (what languages are spoken in the classes? Finnish skills)
- religion and worldview
- clothes, music taste, hobbies, electronical gadgets (phone, computer, internet at home)
- family structure (single parent families, LBGT, big families, how many generations/family members in the same house) – Can you bring your friends home?
- sexual development (early – late developed)
- size of the body (thin – stocky, short – tall)
- sexuality
- Use of the voice to be visible in the class room
- Are there other groups that are bullied or left out?
- Are there any other reasons that students can be bullied or left out?
- Can you give examples?

To what extent are there different levels of power among the student groups?

How does parental participation in school activities influence the student's sense of belonging to school?

Is there name calling at the school and who calls whom names? (Is it only to joke around?) How do the students and the staff react?

What do we mean by students being included and having a sense of belonging? Inclusion or belonging to what: school activities, group work, student groups, normality etc.

- What is the sense of inclusion considered to be? (to hang out with the group, to eat together)
- Who decides what the rules are?

What could make it possible for these students to be accepted in the school community?

- Can you give examples?

If you had all the power to change things, what would you change at school?

What role do the other students play in the discrimination or leaving other students out?

What are the other factors that affect the students' inclusion?

- For example: spaces, rules, habits, customs, routines, group formations, programs, prefects, student unions.

Could teachers and other staff do things differently to prevent students from being marginalized?

If it is so, how?

How would you describe the relations between the teachers and other staff?

- And the relations between teachers?
- Principal
- Teachers of the own language/religion?
- Special needs assistants
- Janitor
- Kitchen staff, cleaning staff
- Counsellor, psychologist

How would you describe the social relations between the teachers and the students?

How would you describe the social relations between the staff and the students?

(Do certain teachers (including mother tongue and religion) or the special needs assistants, school psychologist, lunchroom staff, school caretaker or cleaning staff) play important roles in exclusion and inclusion?

APPENDIX 5 – interview guide for students

Basic information

Tell us about yourself (for example, about your family or day to day life)

- With whom do you live? Who belongs to your family?
- What language/languages do you speak at home?
- Why did you choose this school (by choice, nearest school etc.)?
- Are your parents/other care givers employed at the moment? What kind of work do they do?
- What kind of education do your parents/other care givers have?
- How do you spend your free time? (Hobbies, taking care of your younger siblings etc.)

Outsiderhood

Which students are most likely to be excluded at school?

- A student who is an outsider/excluded from friend groups?
- A student who is an outsider/excluded from official school, for example from classes?
- How is a student included? (friendship groups and formal school)

Practices in the class

Describe an ordinary class

- In what classes do you listen, do the exercises and participate in the lesson? In what classes do you not?
- (Does the behavior of the other students ever disrupt your work in the classrooms/classes?)
- Do the students or teachers do things in the classes that make you feel part of the group or an outsider? What kinds of things?
- Do you identify with the people in the textbooks? Why yes/no? What are your homework practices?

Spaces

Which spaces at the school would you prefer to spend your time? Why?

- Are there spaces that you avoid? Why?
- Are there any school spaces where some students are not welcome? Where do you sit in the canteen? Can you sit wherever you want in the canteen? (Or does one have to sit with their friends? Where can a person without friends sit?)

Relationship with the school staff

Describe your relationship with the school staff? Is there a teacher that you can talk to?

- Do the teachers know you? Do they ask about your free time or, for example, of how you are doing at school?
- Have you had problems in school experience during upper comprehensive school? How did the school act in that situation? Which students go to see the school psychologist or the social worker? Are those students treated differently?

The relationship between home and school

How do your care givers keep in contact with the school?

- Do you feel that your care givers can support you in school-related things? What about with difficulties with your school experience?
- Do your care givers know how are you doing at school?
- Do you talk with your care givers if you have problems with other students or teachers?
- Is the school in contact with your care givers, if they assume that you are having problems in the school? Who is in contact?

I as learner/student

What type of student would you describe yourself as?

- At school, what are you good at?
- At school, what are you not so good at?
- What type of student do the teachers find you to be?
- What do you get good feedback about?
- What do you get bad feedback about?
- How do you get feedback of your performance? (Wilma, face to face talks etc.)
- What do the teachers expect from you?
- Do you participate in the activities organized by the school? Who participates in those activities?
- Do the teachers teach in a way that helps you to learn (or to follow and to understand)? Why/why not?
- Is it easy to work with other students in pairs/groups? If it was possible, would you change the group? Why/why not?

Group relations

- What kind of student groups are there at school? What are the relationships like between the groups? Which group do you belong to?
- Can you spend time with any students you want? Who you do not want to be in contact with?

Bullying/discrimination

From your point of view, what is bullying?

- Have you ever been bullied at school? How? How was the situation solved? How did the other students act? How did it feel?
- Have you been treated in an unjust (unequal) way? How? How did the situation proceed?
- Have other students been bullied or treated in unjust ways?
- Are some specific students bullied because they belong to a specific group? For example, from impoverished/wealthy families? Migrant background students? Students that don't speak Finnish? Based on religion? Based on gender?
- Is there a lot of bullying at the school, or are some students excluded from the student groups? For example, students that are silent or loud?
- Are the students bullied by rumors spread about them?
- Are the students bullied or excluded by using mobile phones, Facebook, Instagram etc.?
- What terms of abuse are used at the school? Why just these? (I have heard words gay, disabled, and whore being used. Why just these words? How do gay students feel?)
- How are students excluded?

Differences and marginalization

Practices: teachers, school assistants, principal

Do the teachers treat all the students in same way?

- Do all the students get equal amounts of attention? Turns to respond? Which students are chosen to be head students?
 - Are there different expectations according to different types of students, such as gender or other differences?
 - Are all the students disciplined in a similar way, or are there differences based on gender, immigrant background etc.? Who gets disciplined? Who can avoid being punished?

Gender

Do the teachers treat boys and girls in a similar way? Examples?

- Is it possible to succeed at the school regardless of one's gender?
- What if someone is not clearly a boy or a girl?

Non-heterosexuality

Do you know students at the school who are not heterosexual?

- What is it like to be a student at this school if you are not heterosexual?

- How are such students seen? Is homosexuality approved of by the other students? Do these students have friends? Are they alone?

Migrant background

Do teachers and students treat migrant background and 'Finnish' students similarly?

- I have heard that the words Finnish and migrants are used here. Which students are called Finnish and which are not? Who are there other than Finnish students?
- Does migrant background or Finnishness affect friendship relations? Are the migrant background students expected to have the same results as other students?
- Can everyone be friends with whoever they want to?
- Can migrant background and Finnish students be friends?
- What about those students who barely speak Finnish? How are their relationships with teachers and other students?

Social class

Do the teachers and students treat other students equally regardless of their social class?

- How does the social class of the student's family affect their school experience? Has your family's social class affected your school experience?
- Does the social class of the student affect their friendships? (Do students talk about the social class of students' families? What do they say?)
- Does it matter if one goes to the museum, theater or cinema with one's family?
- Is the kind of clothing students wear important, or what kind of phone they have?

Learning difficulties

How does the school manage learning difficulties? Teachers and students?

- How are the students with special needs approached?

Disability

How are the students with disabilities treated at the school? By other students and teachers?

Hobbies/free time

Are some hobbies more accepted than others? Which are? Which are not?

Normality

What comes to your mind about the words “normal student”?

- What is a normal student? (Are they more likely to be excluded or included?)
- Are you a normal student? Why yes/no?
- Who decides who is normal?
- What does normal behavior look like?

Finally

- What did you think about taking photographs?
- What did you think about the interview? Was there something that made you wonder or would you like to add something?

APPENDIX 6 - Group interview guide

The main themes are outsiderhood and inclusion. The preliminary results are described: what the students at both schools have mentioned and what came up in the teacher interviews.

- Names of the students and what do they like to do.
- What things affect whether one is excluded or included? Can one change those things?
- Can you describe for the other school what things make students feel included at your school?

Differences, marginalization and normality (Expectations, and treatment of the students)

- In the interviews it came up that the expectations and the attention from some of the teachers was not equally divided between the students. Their attention tended to be directed to the well-performing students (there are more expectations for the well-performing students and they are paid more attention and given feedback about their studying).
- How could we change the expectations toward the students? Should we change them?
- In some groups, louder students disrupt teaching and use much more teacher's time than students who work silently. How could we change it? Should we change it?
- The students have observed that the girls and boys are not treated equally (boys get more attention from the teachers, and the teachers intervene more often in girls' disruptive talk and behavior at class). How could the treatment of girls and boys be more equal? How can unequal relations be changed (also other than those based on gender)?
- Do the students have authority over their own things/matters (for example, respect for privacy, capacity to decide on one's own behalf, the personal limits) at school?
- How could the students be treated more equally in social interaction with the adults in school?

Bullying/discrimination

- How should the school intervene in bullying?

- The adults' intervention in cases of bullying is not strong enough. It seems that telling adults at school about bullying does not help much. How should adults act and intervene in bullying?
- Should the discrimination based on sexual orientation or other reasons be handled more thoroughly?

Normality

According to the students, a **normal** (student) does well at school, behaves in a certain way and wears certain clothes, follows the rules (formal and informal), is sporty, does not wear strange clothes and is clean. Should the notion of normality be expanded? How could it be done?

Groups

- Work in pairs and groups (these are connected to outsiderhood) – How could the formation of groups be fairer?
- Should there be more group work with students from other parallel classes?
- Some students remain outsiders from the groups but not by their own will. There are students with whom the others do not want to work. What could be done so that no-one remains an outsider? Should the groups be bigger/smaller? Why?

Spaces

- How could the school spaces be changed to work better (so that they would feel safer for all, and no-one would be shut out). How could the spaces be used in a better way? Should there be more calm spaces during the recesses? Are there any spaces for praying?

Excluding students with special needs

- The students with special needs have stated that the other students treat them in a different manner, and they are also considered to be different, and on some occasions, they are bullied.
- The teachers do not have the same expectations of them as they do of the other students (for example, they have e-books in many subjects).
- The students with special needs study separately from the others and are also separated from the other students during school events.
 - What could be done about this?
 - What do you think about separate groups based on different subjects such as mathematics etc. On what is the division of the groups based?

Miscellaneous

- What should the school do about students' smoking?
- What should the school do about students' absences? How should they be viewed? What happens if you are absent often? What could be done to avoid anyone dropping out entirely?
- What would you do if you had the freedom to do what you wanted with the school or learning?

Practices in the classes

- How could we reduce disturbance in the classroom, without adding more discipline? Should we? What could be done about the noise?
- How could we give more attention to every student/ or for those who need it?
- Should the students have a say in the practices and contents of lessons, and in the school's mode of action when they include students? Should there be more remedial teaching (language, for whom)?
- How would a good teacher act so that no-one would become an outsider?
 - What advice could you give to teachers, to ensure that no-one becomes an outsider and everyone is treated equally?
- Could you describe a teacher that is 'relaxed yet keeps control of their class', who makes everyone feel included, and who is known to treat students fairly and equally?
 - What do they do differently compared with other teachers?